

The Balkan Socialist Tradition and the Balkan Federation, 1871-1915

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EDITORIAL

THE consequences of the bloody collapse of Yugoslavia, torn apart by nationalism, ethnic cleansing and partition, have been disastrous. The weak successor states compete for economic and political favours from the West. Other Balkan states, notably Greece and Bulgaria, vie for influence over disputed territories such as Macedonia. But above all, the door to direct imperialist intervention in the Balkan Peninsula has been prised wide open.

Nor has the confusion of the left in the world outside diminished. Various sections of the socialist movement have come down on the side of Albanians, Bosnian Muslims, Croats, Macedonians or Serbs in these conflicts. While it is outside the remit of this Editorial Board to take positions on these recent events, there is nevertheless a wealth of historical material from the history of the socialist movement that casts light on the complex national questions in the Balkans

It is therefore all the more necessary — and refreshing — to remind ourselves of the position urged upon the Second International by the socialists of the Balkans in the years before the First World War. This tradition, buried for so long by Stalinism, argued that imperialism could only be fought effectively if the Balkan peoples were not divided by nationalism, but were united in the revolutionary struggle for a Balkan Federation.

The Editorial Board of this magazine is proud to present this documentation to its readers, most of which appears in English for the first time, and our debt to Dragan Plavšić and Andreja Živković must be obvious on every page. We are convinced that there is much that can still be learned from this material. We can only apologise that it has been so long in coming.

Editorial Board

Revolutionary History

Andreja Živković

The Balkan Socialist Tradition and the Balkan Federation, 1871-1915

General Introduction

WESTERN intervention in the Balkans in the last decade or more has been catastrophic. Far from 'opposing nationalism', as its apologists claim, the West has consistently intervened on the side of nationalist forces to promote its own imperial interests in the region. Thus, to take just one example, the 1999 'humanitarian war' by NATO against Serbia was an intervention in favour of Albanian nationalism. Its results were the ethnic cleansing of 200 000 Serbs from Kosovo and the push by the Albanian guerrilla movement for a Greater Albania at the expense of the Republic of Macedonia. In fact, the wars of the ex-Yugoslavia provided a pretext for the US to demonstrate that it alone could maintain order in Europe and to project its power into the vacuum left behind in the East by the retreat of Russian power. The present occupation of Iraq was prefigured in the occupation of Kosovo.

Most commentators have tended to ignore the way Great Power intervention has shaped and exacerbated the nationalist struggles in the ex-Yugoslavia in favour of a narrow focus on the pros and cons of different local nationalist leaders or programmes. They have been joined by some on the left who have tended to see an oppressive Greater Serbian nationalism as the fount of all evil, and considered all the other nationalist movements progressive since they opposed Serbian 'fascism'.¹ The logic of both positions tends to slide towards appeals to the Great Powers to intervene in the region, hence the support of sections of liberal and socialist opinion for the NATO war against Serbia.²

1. See, for example, Branka Magai, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-Up, 1980-92*, London and New York, 1993, pp xx-xxi and *passim*.
2. See, for example, Branka Magai, 'Viewpoint [A Dialogue on the NATO War]', *Against the Current*, July-August 1999

This was not the mistake of the Balkan socialist tradition that evolved in the period from the end of the 1860s to 1914, and whose hallmark was intransigent opposition to both imperialism and Balkan nationalism. On this basis, it was to oppose the First Balkan War of 1912, fought between the Balkan states and Ottoman Turkey, and then the Second Balkan War of 1913 where the former allies fell out over the Ottoman legacy in Europe. Its finest hour came in 1914, when, in the teeth of the collapse of the Second International into different chauvinist camps, the majority of its representatives refused to vote for war credits and stood up to oppose the imperialist war (see Section VIII: The First World War). Tragically, this tradition was buried by Stalinism and then largely forgotten after 1945. What little is known about it in the West comes from the war journalism of Leon Trotsky, who covered the Balkan Wars as a correspondent for a Ukrainian liberal newspaper.³ These writings, long admired as the product of a penetrating mind and fine prose stylist, also bear the direct stamp of the ideas of the Balkan socialists, and deserve to be read again today in this light.

This collection of texts from the Balkan socialist tradition,⁴ and from Western socialists reacting to events in the Balkans, spanning the period 1871-1915, is designed to convey the lessons of this tradition — its opposition to both imperialism and nationalism in the name of a Balkan federation — lessons that remain of astonishing relevance to the present situation in the Balkans.

The very fate of the Balkans has been determined by its division between competing empires, in the period covered by our collection, the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. From the early nineteenth century, the decline of the Ottoman Empire created the 'Eastern Question'. This turned on the question of which of the Great Powers was to control both south-eastern Europe and the commercially and strategically vital gateway between Europe and Asia when the 'sick man of Europe' had finally been put out of his misery. If Russia tended, at least until the 1880s, to hatch schemes to divide the ailing Ottoman Empire in order to secure an outlet to the Mediterranean through the control of Constantinople and the Black Sea Straits, Britain tended to support its integrity. Britain was concerned with the Russian threat to its strategic and economic interests along the route to India through the eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. But all the powers were sucked into the region by the continuing decline of Turkey, fearful lest their rivals should gain strategic advantage over them.

In the course of this 'great game', all the powers were at different points to support the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. They were also forced by the frequent revolts in the empire to pay lip service to the national rights of the Balkan

3. See Leon Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-13: The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, New York, 1981.
4. This collection focuses on the Bulgarian revolutionary socialists, the Narrows, and the Serbian Social Democratic Party, the two most significant socialist parties in the Balkans in this period and the driving force behind the socialist movement for a Balkan federation. It does not include any texts by the Greek socialists, as we were unable to find a translator in time. It must be noted, however, that the Greek socialists hardly participated in the Balkan socialist movement for a Balkan federation until the First World War.

peoples. But they did so in such a way as to maintain their control over the region, and to lay the basis for future internecine conflicts between the Balkan peoples. The classic example is the Congress of Berlin of 1878 that met to determine the fate of the Ottoman Empire following its defeat in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, and which was the author of the territorial-political structure of the Balkans in the period covered by this collection.

After its victory against Turkey, Russia carved out an enormous Bulgarian state which was shrunk at Berlin to less than half its original size, and then split in two by the other powers. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the scene of a peasant insurrection against Ottoman rule in 1875, were placed under Austrian occupation. Serbia, having been induced by Russia into war with Turkey in 1876 with the promise of gains in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was now passed into the Austrian sphere of influence in exchange for Russia playing a similar rôle in Bulgaria. Nor were the other Balkan states particularly satisfied with the terms of their independence.

In general, the Balkans that emerged from the Treaty of Berlin were fragmented into a patchwork of competing dwarf states dominated by the Great Powers, and eyeing up the same territory in order to secure their viability. Serbia, blocked by Austria from expanding westwards in the direction of Bosnia and Herzegovina or from unifying with Montenegro, was pushed with Bulgaria and Greece into the struggle for Ottoman Macedonia. The apple of discord laid on the table at Berlin was to result in the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885 and the war between the Balkan allies in 1913 over the territories won from Turkey in the First Balkan war of 1912.

Of course, Great Power intervention has not been the only factor at work in the region. Just as the Great Powers sought to exploit the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, so too national movements among the Balkan peoples sought to win independence from the oppressive Turkish yoke and create modern nation states uniting all their co-nationals. However, these movements were soon faced with the problem that no nation was by itself capable of either overthrowing the still mighty Ottoman Empire or maintaining its independence from the Great Powers, particularly Russia and Austria. Even the Serbian revolution of 1804 and the Greek revolution of 1821, rooted in the struggle of the insurgent peasant masses, had required Great Power intervention in order to succeed.

Two opposing traditions of national liberation emerged in response to this dilemma.

The first tradition was that of bourgeois-dynastic Balkan nationalism. Each Balkan nationalism aspired to unite all the members of the nation in a single state at the expense of Turkey and the other Balkan nations. This tradition followed two apparently contradictory, but in fact complementary tactics. On the one hand, each Balkan nationalism sought Great Power sponsorship for its greater national ambitions against those of its rivals. But this normally led not to greater independence from Turkey, but to greater dependence on the given Great Power patron. Serbia was passed from Russian to Austrian protection after 1881, and was thus led into more than 20 years of vassalage. Similarly, in

the last few years Albanian nationalism, unable itself to overcome Greater Serbian oppression, has thrown itself into the arms of US imperialism and thereby become a pawn in the present colonial overlordship of the Balkans. On the other hand, in order to counterbalance this very same dependence on the Great Powers, Balkan nationalists sought to conclude various opportunistic and short-lived all-Balkan alliances for a war against Turkey. The Balkan League, the only successful example of such an alliance in the whole history of the Eastern Question, won a stunning victory over Turkey in 1912-13, thus annihilating feudalism in south-eastern Europe. However, the nationalist cupidity of the Balkan states immediately plunged them into the internecine Second Balkan War of 1913. Now completely divided, they were left prostrate before imperialism, becoming mere counters in the inter-imperialist battles of the First World War. Thus, whatever path the Balkan bourgeoisie followed, it was not able fully to liberate the peninsula from foreign domination, and therefore its rare victories tended to be short-lived.

The second tradition was that of Balkan revolutionary-democracy, associated with Rigas Velestinlis in Greece in the 1790s, GS Rakovski, Lyuben Karavelov, Vasil Levski and Hristo Botev in Bulgaria in the 1860s and 1870s, the revolutionary Youth (*Omladina*) in Serbia in the 1860s and 1870s, and with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation in the 1890s and 1900s, which looked to the model of the Serbian and Greek revolutions.⁵ It was inspired by the idea that liberation was only possible if all the oppressed peoples united and fought the Ottoman Empire together in one single all-Balkan revolution. For the national revolutionary tradition, the divisions of the Balkan peoples were the secret of their weakness, and this could only be overcome in a Balkan federation that could stand up to the Great Powers, and in which all the Balkan peoples could find freedom and equality.

Early Balkan socialism was to emerge from the fusion of the left wing of this national revolutionary tradition with the ideas of Russian populist socialism. Its founders were Svetozar Marković (1846-1875) in Serbia and Hristo Botev (1849-1876) in Bulgaria. Their key idea was that national liberation from the Ottoman Empire could not be separated from the social liberation of the Balkan peasantry from both the Muslim lords and the rising Balkan ruling classes. Foreign rule could not be destroyed unless the domestic structures of oppression were overthrown. On the basis of this idea, Marković, perhaps the most original and daring socialist thinker ever to have come out of the Balkans, developed a rigorous critique of Greater Serbian nationalism and its idea of liberation from above

5. Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798) was a Greek revolutionary influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, and was executed by the Ottoman authorities. Georgi Stoilov Rakovski (1821-1867) was a writer, poet and leader of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement in the 1860s, and was influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution. Lyuben Karavelov (1834-1879) was a writer and journalist influenced by Russian populist ideas, and a founder of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee in Bucharest in 1872. Vasil Levski (1837-1873) was a revolutionary influenced by Russian populist ideas, and a founder of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee. He was captured and hanged by the Ottoman authorities.

through the military expansion of the Serbian state on the model of Bismarck's Prussia and Cavour's Piedmont in the unification of Germany and Italy (see Section I: The Origins of the Balkan Socialist Tradition). For Marković, this path would, given the intermixed character of the Balkan peoples, turn Serbia into a new Austria-Hungary, a prison-house of peoples, making them into its most bitter enemies. He argued that only a Balkan-wide revolution that destroyed all the feudal and dynastic state structures on the Balkans as well as the social structures that underpinned them could enable the Balkan peoples to achieve national unification in a Balkan federation free from all forms of imperial and national oppression.

This revolutionary approach — involving the rejection of *both* the territorial and political structures on the Balkan Peninsula *and* the dismemberment of the empires into a patchwork of weak and divided petty statelets — directed against both imperialism and Balkan nationalism, was to be taken up by the Balkan Marxist (social democratic) tradition that emerged in the 1890s.⁶

Balkan Social Democracy developed from the fusion of the Russian populist socialist tradition, as represented by Dimităr Blagoev (1856-1924) in Bulgaria, and Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea (1855-1920) in Romania, with German and Russian Marxism in the context of peasant societies experiencing uneven capitalist development. Supervised by the Great Powers, European capitalism began to penetrate the self-sufficient peasant economy through the medium of railways, state loans and foreign manufactured goods. Modest industrialisation began to transform the conditions of urban labour by the 1900s, leading to the emergence of small industrial proletariats, but rarely touched the countryside. Hence the Balkan socialist movements remained relatively weak and small before 1914, urban islands in the still largely undifferentiated rural sea around them.

The Balkan socialists saw their first task as establishing the theoretical basis for socialism in societies still at the very dawn of capitalist development. Dobrogeanu-Gherea offered the most original response to this problem.⁷ His argument was that underdeveloped countries were inevitably brought under the influence of more advanced capitalist ones, but this did not result in a process of organic internal development repeating the path taken by advanced nations. Underdeveloped nations would tend to import the 'forms', that is, the superstructure of modern capitalist civilisation. Given the backwardness of these nations, such forms would initially remain without real content — producing unevenness⁸ —

6. Social democratic parties were formed in 1891 and 1894 in Bulgaria, 1893 and 1907 in Romania, 1903 in Serbia and 1909 in Bosnia. Two rival socialist 'parties' (grouplets) were formed in Greece in 1909 and 1911.

7. 'O Socijalizmu u zaostalim zemljama' ('On Socialism in Backward Countries'), *Borba (Struggle)*, Volume 7, nos 1-5, 1914.

8. Thus, for example, modern democratic constitutions and varying degrees of suffrage coexisted with monarchical domination (for example, Bulgaria). Trotsky has left us with a series of vivid portraits of such 'uneven and combined development' on the Balkan Peninsula. See, for example, Chapter 3, 'The Enigma of Bulgarian Democracy', in Trotsky, *op cit*, pp47-51.

but this content would eventually assert itself under the impact of international capitalism. The task of socialists was therefore to clear the path for industrialisation in order to create the basis for socialist transformation.⁹ Increasingly, however, it became evident that the question of liberating the tendencies towards capitalist development was intimately tied to the resolution of the national question in the Balkans.

In this context, Blagoev, the founder of the revolutionary tendency in Bulgarian Social Democracy, the Narrows (*Tesnyaki*),¹⁰ argued in 1885 that the Balkan federation represented not only the means for achieving the national independence of the Balkan peoples, but also for preventing them from becoming agrarian colonies of Western capitalism.¹¹ Thus, the question of capitalist development in the Balkans admitted of no purely national solutions, and was in fact identical to the problem of the national unification of the peoples of the Balkans in one state.

Two different currents emerged within Balkan socialism in response to this problem.

For the first current, the Bulgarian and Macedonian Narrows and the Serbian Social Democrats, the precondition for the national unification of the Balkan peoples was the revolutionary overthrow of the *status quo* of semi-feudal empires and the patchwork of petty nation states in the Balkans. The chief supports of this *status quo* were imperialism and Balkan nationalism (see Section VI: The Balkan Federation and Balkan Social Democracy). In their view, the struggle of the Balkan bourgeoisies to achieve national unification merely reinforced the emerging system of imperialism that held the Balkans in thrall. The nationalist bourgeoisie was either incapable of acting independently of one or another imperialist power, or its attempts to provoke the Great Powers to intervene against Turkey threatened to set off a war between the Balkan peoples from which only the Great Powers could benefit. Thus for the Serbian socialist leader Dimitrije Tucović (1881-1914) and Blagoev, arguably the most important Marxist thinker ever produced in the Balkans, the struggle against external domination could only be successful as a struggle against the Balkan national bourgeoisie and its greater nationalist chauvinism and expansionism. Only the proletariat had both the interest and capacity to lead the struggle for national unification,

9. Ghera, writing in a Romanian context dominated by the great estates of the Boyar nobility, saw the system of what he called 'neo-serfdom' on the land (similar to that in Russia after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861) as the main barrier to capitalist development. See Ghera, *op cit*.
10. The Bulgarian Social Democratic Labour Party split in 1903 into two factions. The 'Narrow' faction was so-called because it pursued a narrow policy of class struggle by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, while the reformist 'Broad' faction pursued a broad policy of alliances of all 'progressive forces' to achieve democratic reforms.
11. See Dimităr Blagoev, 'Balkanskata Federatsiya i Makedoniya' ('The Balkan Federation and Macedonia'), *Makedonski Glas*, 1 June 1885. At this point, Blagoev, as a populist socialist, saw the Balkan federation as a way of achieving economic development without having to go through the purgatory of capitalism, as the basis of a transition to socialism. Later, as a social democrat, he saw it as the only way of achieving capitalist development in the Balkans.

and would have to do so in the teeth of the resistance of the bourgeoisie. This was the perspective of national unification from below in a Balkan federation.

The second current was represented by Christian Rakovsky (1873-1941), leader of the Romanian socialists, by the left wing of the reformist tendency in Bulgarian socialism, the Broads,¹² by the left wing of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, and by the socialists of the Ottoman Empire (especially the Workers' Federation of Salonika). Rakovsky, the chief exponent of this tendency and the most prominent international representative of Balkan socialism in the period before 1914, remains for socialists in the West the incarnate spirit of Balkan socialism. Not only does this ignore the rôle of the Bulgarian Narrows and the Serbian Social Democratic Party as the driving force behind Balkan revolutionary socialism, it also fails to grasp the precise nature of his influence within the Balkans and the ends to which it was directed.

The revolutionary current started from the premise that the *status quo* in the Balkans must be overthrown. In the 1890s, Rakovsky, together with Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg, had also argued against the *status quo* in the Balkans and in support of the independence movements of the Balkan nations against Ottoman Turkey (see Section II: Marxism and the Eastern Question). A decade later, Rakovsky's overriding concern, like that of the Second International, was now to keep the peace in the region and to prevent revisions to the territorial *status quo* from being the cause of a cataclysmic world war, a war from which only the Great Powers would benefit. After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, Rakovsky defended the integrity of the oppressive Ottoman Empire as the only barrier to further fragmentation and war in the Balkans, as the only barrier to imperialism (see Section IV: The Revolution in Turkey). For him, the revolution, by enabling the resolution of the national question within the framework of the empire, had removed much of the cause for conflict between the Balkan states and Turkey. The path was now clear for them to unite in a defensive military alliance directed against the Great Powers, laying the basis for a Balkan *confederation*. This was the perspective of national unification from above. Hence, between 1908 and 1912, Rakovsky worked tirelessly to construct a popular front based around the nebulous idea of the Balkan confederation involving some unlikely bedfellows: the chauvinist Turkish bourgeoisie (Young Turks), 'democratic' bourgeois parties in the Balkans, the reformist and revolutionary socialist parties in the Balkans, and, of course, progressive and socialist opinion in the West.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 put these arguments to the test (see Section VII: The Balkan Wars). Rakovsky's belief in an evolutionary path to a Balkan confederation from above was purely fanciful, because the expansionist aspirations of the Balkan bourgeoisie stood in violent opposition to the imperialist pretensions of Turkey in the Balkans. As Lenin was to remark in 1913, the inability of the Balkan proletariat and peasantry to deal with the problem of Turkey by revolutionary means opened the door to war and to the dismemberment

12. See note 10 above.

of Turkey by the Balkan bourgeoisie.¹³ On the other hand, Blagoev and Tucović, believing the Balkan bourgeoisie to be too weak ever to act independently of imperialism, had underestimated its ability, in the absence of a proletarian solution and under very specific international circumstances, to offer its own solution to the problem of national unification, however limited, wretched and temporary. However, the internecine Second Balkan War of 1913 confirmed their general argument that the nationalist struggle of the Balkan bourgeoisies precluded real and lasting national unification. Moreover it confirmed their general approach, based on the proletariat, the only really revolutionary class in the Balkans. But in this period, the revolutionary tendency in Balkan socialism failed to draw the necessary conclusion from these two premises; that is to say, given that a bourgeois federation would still be subject to the centrifugal forces of inter-bourgeois national competition and uneven capitalist development, the creation of a real and lasting Balkan federation was bound up with the abolition of capitalist society. After 1917, the demand for a *socialist federation of the Balkans* became the centrepiece of Balkan communist strategy.

The Balkan Wars ripped to shreds the entire Balkan policy of Rakovsky and the Second International, founded as it was on the defence of the Ottoman Empire as the only basis for peace and progress in the region. By contrast, the Narrows and the Serbian socialists, like Lenin, saw that the defence of the territorial integrity of a state ultimately meant accommodating to it. But, also like Lenin, neither were they national separatists. Lenin raised these two pillars of any principled socialist position on the national question into his celebrated concept of the right to self-determination to the point of secession as the only basis for a united revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed nations for freedom. However, in this period, the Bulgarian Narrows and the Serbian socialists did not have a coherent position on the right to self-determination. In fact, like Rakovsky, they tended to avoid raising the demand for the right to secession of the nations of the Ottoman Empire as they believed that this would encourage war and/or a logic of fragmentation on the Balkan peninsula, thus playing into the hands of the Great Powers. However, *in practice*, unlike Rakovsky and the Second International, they refused to defend any aspect of the imperialist territorial-political *status quo* in the Balkans, and so fully supported the independence struggles of the oppressed Habsburg and Ottoman nationalities. (See the Sections III: The Bulgarian Socialists and the Macedonian National Liberation Movement, V: The Annexation of Bosnia, and VII: The Balkan Wars).

The recognition of the fundamental role of the right to self-determination in Balkan socialist practice was to be the key contribution of the Balkan communist tradition (in its pre-Stalinist phase) which fused the revolutionary concept of the Balkan federation with Lenin's theory of the right to self-determination.¹⁴ It is in

13. VI Lenin, 'The Social Significance of the Serbo-Bulgarian Victories', *Collected Works*, Volume 18, Moscow, 1963 pp397-9.

14. See, for example, 'Rezolucija o nacionalnom pitanju, III zemaljska konferencija KPJ' ('Resolution on the National Question, Third National Conference of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia'), December 1923, in *Istorijski Arhiv Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije, Vol 2, Kongresi i zemal-*

this form that the Balkan socialist tradition from Marković to Blagoev-Tucović has direct relevance to the break-up of 'socialist Yugoslavia' (1945-91).

The belief that this state was progressive led some Western socialists to oppose the right to self-determination to the point of secession from Yugoslavia during its break-up. Titoist Yugoslavia was indeed a progressive development on the first, monarchist Yugoslavia of 1918-41, since it overthrew national oppression by the old Serbian ruling class. However it was not based on full *equality* between its constituent nations. The Kosovo Albanians, for example, were nationally oppressed (under Serbian rule) until the end of the 1960s, and afterwards were still subject to national discrimination (lacking formal republican status, although enjoying *de facto* republican powers after 1974), finally to fall under a Serbian police dictatorship after 1989. Nor could the Albanian question, like the Macedonian question, be resolved in Yugoslavia, the land of the South Slavs (which the Albanians are not), but only within the framework of a Balkan federation. This points to the fact that Yugoslavia, progressive as it was, was incomplete, and was based on a narrow Yugoslav nationalism. For this reason, the defence of the integrity of Yugoslavia during its break-up involved an accommodation to Yugoslav nationalism. This in practice meant an accommodation to Greater Serbian nationalism, which had taken on the mantle of Yugoslav nationalism as a Trojan horse in its campaign to create a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

But, if the failure to defend the right to separate led some Western socialists to accommodate to Greater Serbian nationalism, the misleading assumption that the defence of this right against Greater Serbian nationalism necessarily implied advocating secession led others to accommodate to Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian Muslim nationalism. It meant taking sides in the shifting greater nationalist camps that were vying to dismember ex-Yugoslavia. The logical source of this degeneration lies in the failure to link the defence of the right to self-determination in the Balkans, that is, of the right to national freedom and equality, with the concept of the Balkan federation. Without this concept, the defence of the right to self-determination in practice does not offer an alternative to the separatism of different nationalist movements, and thus to the nationalist wars and Great Power interference that inevitably ensue. It is only within the framework of a politics of the Balkan federation that the right to separate becomes a source of unity, the basis of a revolutionary struggle to unite the Balkan peoples against national oppression and imperialist domination in the Balkans. In this way, the Balkan socialist tradition provides an internationalist alternative to the symbiotic and disastrous relationship between nationalist conflict and imperialist intervention in the Balkans.

This internationalist position has found unwelcome support in two opposing quarters today.

On the one hand, it comes from Mihailo Marković, the one-time humanist

izh Konferencije KPJ, 1919-1939 (Historical Archive of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Volume 2, Congresses and National Conferences of the CPY, 1919-1939), Belgrade, 1949, pp67-73. We hope to present the important and rich debates of the early Balkan communist tradition on the national question in a future volume.

Marxist philosopher of the Praxis Group and determined opponent of Stalinism in the name of a vision of socialism as the democratic self-management of the associated producers. Marković later achieved notoriety as a co-author of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) *Memorandum* of 1986, whose thesis of a Serbian nation threatened with genocide in Kosovo and divided and exploited by the federal structure of Titoist Yugoslavia was lifted by Milošević in his rise to power and drive for a greater Serbia. Marković then sealed his capitulation to Serbian nationalism by becoming a senior figure in Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) in the 1990s. He has recently sought to press-gang Dimitrije Tucović into the Serbian nationalist fold with the aim of justifying the expansionist wars waged by the SPS. For Marković, writing in 1996, Tucović's anti-imperialist critique of the oppression of the Bosnian people under Austro-Hungarian occupation, and more generally of the policy of divide and rule pursued by European capitalism on the Balkan Peninsula, was of direct relevance to the situation in the Balkans in the 1990s.¹⁵ According to this view, Serbia, cordoned off by sanctions, was fighting to free itself from the stranglehold of imperialism and was under attack from all sides by the ex-Yugoslav nations who had become the tools of the Great Powers. But this is to distort the real sense of Tucović's critique, and to present him as a *purely anti-imperialist* thinker. The thrust of Tucović's critique of imperialism was in fact *anti-nationalist*. For Tucović, the only means of resisting imperialism and its politics of divide and rule was through a revolutionary struggle against the enemy at home, against the national bourgeoisie. In this respect, the Serbian Revolution of October 2000 that overthrew the Milošević regime was a step forward, since for the first time the Serbian people, led by the working class, turned their guns on their own ruling class.

On the other hand, Stephen Schwartz and Christopher Hitchens have recently represented Tucović as simply a critic of Serbian nationalism, conveniently ignoring the anti-imperialist side of his thought. Tucović's blistering critique of Serbian oppression of the Albanians during and after the Balkan Wars is invoked to provide spurious socialist cover for the NATO war against Serbia of 1999.¹⁶ But Tucović's argument was that Serbian expansionism had thrown the Albanian people into the arms of Austria-Hungary and Italy, who then imposed an 'independent' Albanian state in order to block Serbia from access to the Adriatic, and to extend their own influence deep into the Balkans. In other words, the whole thrust of Tucović's critique of Serbian nationalism was anti-imperialist. Similarly, the blame for the transformation of the Albanians into the handymen of NATO in 1999, and for the reverse ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Serbs, lies squarely with Greater Serbian nationalism. This confirms Tucović's argument that it is only through the struggle against greater national oppression that imperialism can be defeated in the Balkans.

15. See 'Dimitrije Tucović o socijalizmu, demokratiji i Balkanskom pitanju' ('Dimitrije Tucović on Socialism, Democracy and the Balkan Question'), *Alternativa mišli Dimitrija Tucovića (The Actuality of the Ideas of Dimitrije Tucović)*, eds Mihailo Marković and Dragan Simunović, Belgrade, 1996, pp60-1.
16. See Stephen Schwartz, *Kosovo: Background to a War*, with a preface by Christopher Hitchens, London, 2000.

We are therefore proud to set the record straight by presenting a substantial extract from Tucović's *chef d'oeuvre*, *Serbia and Albania: Towards a Critique of the Policy of Conquest of the Serbian Bourgeoisie* (see Section VII: The Balkan Wars). Here the reader will see the guiding thread running through the Balkan socialist tradition: the struggle against *both imperialism and Balkan nationalism* in the name of a Balkan federation.

Only this internationalist project can adequately address the problems facing the Balkans today. Given the expansion of the USA, first into the vacuum of receding Russian power in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and now into the Middle East, and the system of protectorates and military bases stretching from the western Adriatic to the Persian Gulf, the Balkans remain of strategic importance for the Great Powers as the gateway between Europe and Asia. Hence the Great Powers will not suddenly loosen the manacles binding the hands of the Bosnian peoples or the Kosovo Albanians, nor will NATO 'abandon' its new Balkan members. The struggle against imperialism in the Balkans remains the central task for socialists today. But this brings us to the other side of the importance of the Balkan socialist tradition today. The only means to defeat imperialism is through a united struggle of the Balkan peoples against the divisive nationalism of the Balkan bourgeoisie. The Balkan federation must remain the central axis of this struggle, since it is the only means by which the Balkan peoples can achieve self-determination, and can live together in peace and equality.

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I: The Origins of the Balkan Socialist Tradition: Between Populism and Marxism

Introduction

TWO figures stand out as central influences on the early development of Balkan socialism: Svetozar Marković from Serbia, and Hristo Botev from Bulgaria.

Svetozar Marković is arguably the most important and sophisticated socialist thinker to have emerged in the Balkans in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although he died of tuberculosis in 1875 aged only 28, shortly after his release from a Serbian prison, his voluminous writings, though marred by eclecticism, address a wide range of economic, political, social and cultural questions. Born in 1846, the son of a minor state official, he secured a Russian scholarship to study in St Petersburg, where he joined a revolutionary student circle chiefly influenced by the theoretician of Russian Populism, Nikolai Chernyshevsky. Just as Chernyshevsky was later a major influence on leading Russian Marxists such as Plekhanov and Lenin, Marković was a comparable influence on the generation of Serbian Marxists, such as Dimitrije Tucović and Dušan Popović, who led the Serbian Social Democratic Party before 1914.

The Serbia to which Svetozar Marković returned after his studies was ruled by a Serbian prince and a notoriously corrupt state bureaucracy which was bitterly detested by the population at large, overwhelmingly small peasants who worked their own land. Increasingly indebted and impoverished as Serbia made the transition to a competitive money economy and as the state imposed ever greater taxes to fund the rudiments of a modern state, in particular a standing army, the peasants had much to be bitter about.

Marković proceeded to establish the first socialist newspaper in the Balkans in 1871,¹ and to apply Russian populist ideas to Serbia. In essence, he advocated

1. Marković called his newspaper *Radnicka* (*The Worker*) despite the fact that there was no working class to speak of in Serbia at the time. Eclectic as ever, he adopted the term from Western so-

a new society governed from below by the peasants themselves in opposition to existing society governed from above by the state bureaucracy. Marković proposed that the essential units of the new society be the traditional Serbian *zadruga*, or extended family unit of several generations who worked their own land communally, and the *opština*, or local commune, made up of representatives from the local *zadrugas*, which would elect a central National Council. A vigorous defender of the Paris Commune of 1871, Marković's model of a direct democracy based on peasant communal institutions is an early Serbian version in agrarian conditions of the workers' councils that sprang up later in more industrial societies. As the American scholar Woodford McClellan has noted:

The essence of his reforms was the democratization of society through the worker communes, to which would be transferred nearly all political and economic power; in a later day his slogan might have been 'all power to the worker communes'.²

Like his mentor Chernyshevsky, who argued that Russia could avoid the inhuman misery of capitalism and proletarianisation by means of the Russian peasant commune, the *obshchina*, Marković also hoped that Serbia could similarly bypass capitalism and leap forward to socialism.³

Serbia was then still part of the Ottoman Empire, though it had won semi-independence during the mass Serbian peasant uprisings against Ottoman rule of 1804-13 and 1815-17, collectively known as the Serbian Revolution.⁴ However, most Serbs still lived outside the Serbian principality as oppressed subjects of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Inspired by the model of Bismarck's Prussia and Cavour's Piedmont, the Serbian state bureaucracy began to dream of uniting all Serbs into a Greater Serbian state and thus of breaking the chains of their economic and political dependence. Marković became an uncompromising opponent of the Greater Serbian idea.

The first article that appears below is the 'Conclusion' to his most famous

cialists, and simply redefined it to mean those who worked (the peasants) as opposed to those who lived off their labour (the bureaucrats).

2. Woodford D McClellan, *Svetozar Marković and the Origins of Balkan Socialism* (Princeton University Press, 1964), p250. This work remains one of the best objective studies of Marković in any language, including Serbo-Croat. The libertarian anti-bureaucratic content of his thought meant that Marković was treated warily in Tito's Yugoslavia.
3. Contrary to the oft-repeated charge of historical determinism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels also accepted that capitalism could be bypassed in Russia on the basis of the *obshchina*, although, with characteristic realism, they linked this to proletarian revolution in the West. See Marx and Engels, 'Preface to the Second Russian Edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*' (1882), *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Volume 24, p426.
4. There is very little in English about the Revolution. The great German historian, Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), wrote a history, *Die serbische revolution* (Hamburg, 1829), expanded versions of which were translated into English. See *History of Serbia* (London, 1848) translated by Mrs Alexander Kerr. A further English edition appeared with additional material on Bosnia by Ranke in 1853.

work, *Serbia in the East* (1872), which argued that the hopes raised by the Serbian Revolution of 1804 had been betrayed by a venal bureaucratic oligarchy. The 'Conclusion' contains a searing attack on the Greater Serbian idea in which Marković vividly counterposes ruling, bureaucratic Serbia, with its plans of territorial aggrandisement, to the Serbian people with their revolutionary traditions.

Ever mindful of the fact that the Balkans comprised a complex myriad of many different and intermixed national groups, Marković argues that the idea of Greater Serbia inevitably entailed engaging in a strategy of conquest which was certain to bring the Serbs into conflict with their Balkan neighbours. In opposition to an essentially Prussian model of national liberation from above by means of a militarised and nationally exclusive state bureaucracy, Marković advocates national liberation from below by means of a Balkan-wide mass peasant revolution, a vision inspired by the Serbian Revolution of 1804 and the Greek Revolution of 1821.⁵ It is from such a revolution that Marković envisages the emergence of a Balkan federation which would do away with all existing empires and states, including the Serbian one, and in which the peoples of the peninsula would gain the freedom to organise their economic and political affairs in accordance with their own needs.

The second article in this section is an edited version of Marković's 'Slav Austria and Serb Unity' (July 1871), in which he attacks the idea that the Habsburg Empire can be transformed into a federation of nations, with the majority Slavs as equals. Four years after the Austrian and Magyar ruling classes had reached an agreement in 1867 to rule the empire jointly, most Slav leaders, above all the Czechs, sought to reach a similar accommodation with the Habsburgs, backing the short-lived conservative federalist government of Count von Hohenwart (February-October 1871).⁶ At this time, the empire was divided into a perplexing assortment of historic, feudal crownlands that bore little or no relationship to national populations. But while Slav politicians were agreed on the goal of decentralising German and Magyar power, they were divided between those who favoured a federal set-up with greater autonomy for the existing historic crownlands, and those who advocated a federal arrangement based instead on national territories.

Marković addresses this question in characteristically uncompromising terms by calling for the revolutionary destruction of the empire — though *not* in the customary sense of its territorial dismemberment into petty national states. His demand is for the destruction of *the social and political structures* of Habsburg rule

5. The Greek Revolution of 1821-29 was, like the Serbian one before it, a mass peasant uprising that eventually led to Greek independence in 1830, though many Greeks were left outside the new state. Russia's declaration of war on Turkey in 1828 led Britain and France to back independence as the only way of holding Russia at bay.

6. Karl Siegmund, Count von Hohenwart (1824-1899) was a conservative opponent of German and Magyar centralism. He supported greater Slav autonomy in Bohemia (for the Czechs) and Galicia (for the Poles). Two Czechs and one Pole joined his cabinet. However, the opposition of the German liberals (over the minority Bohemian Germans) and the Magyars (who feared autonomy for the Croats and Serbs of Hungary) brought about his downfall.

that underpinned the empire and the oppression of nations within it. For Marković, *only* a revolution that demolished the imperial state machine could be the basis of a true and consistent 'federalism of nations', and a better life free from all forms of oppression for the mass of the people.

But crucially Marković is *no* advocate of the territorial integrity of the empire either.⁷ His sweeping vision is of a revolution which would unify the oppressed Slav nations of the empire *and* their Slav brethren beyond its borders. In particular, Marković has in mind the Serb nation, divided like no other by several historic crownlands within the empire, and outside it by the two Serb principalities of Serbia and Montenegro, and by the Ottoman Empire. Thus, by liberating nations from imperial oppression, the revolution would open the door to the establishment of a genuinely sustainable multinational federation of equals — across existing imperial and other state borders — on the much-vaunted Swiss model. Marković reserves his greatest scorn for those Austro-Slav politicians who wanted to preserve the territorial integrity of the empire, and thus Habsburg rule, by compromising the national principle with an appeal to historic crownland rights.

Marković was therefore the first Balkan socialist to link three elements into an integrated and indissoluble whole: social and political revolution against the imperial ruling class and state as the indispensable precondition of national liberation and unity across existing borders, leading to the emergence of a federation of nations from the ruins of empire.

These three elements foreshadow the approach Bulgarian and Serbian Marxists later adopted vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire prior to the First World War. They too argued that national liberation and a Balkan federation could not be achieved without a revolution that destroyed the Ottoman state and ruling class. By contrast, their contemporaries, the Austro-Marxists of the Habsburg Empire, advocated a reformist programme of national autonomy explicitly designed to preserve the empire's territorial integrity. By identifying with the empire in this way, the Austro-Marxists accommodated to the Habsburg state and in practice jettisoned revolutionary politics. Indeed, they later supported the Habsburgs during the First World War. Marković's ideas can therefore be read today as a prescient refutation of the Austro-Marxist position on the national question.⁸

Hristo Botev is Bulgaria's most revered national poet, and was later an inspiration for Bulgarian Marxists, such as Dimităr Blagoev, who led the revolution-

7. This critical refusal to identify with the territorial integrity of a state, which Marković implicitly grasped would result in political accommodation to it, led in two directions. On the one hand, it could be concretely theorised as the right of nations to self-determination, including secession, as it was later by Lenin. But on the other hand, it could lead to calls for pan-Balkan revolution and federation as the abstract answer to every national question. Despite the significance of its contribution, Balkan Marxism prior to 1914 was to remain uneasily trapped between these two positions.

8. For the Austro-Marxists on this question, see Section V: The Annexation of Bosnia in 1908 by Austria-Hungary. For the Bulgarians and the Serbs, see Section VI: The Socialist Theory of a Balkan Federation, 1908-12.

ary wing of Bulgarian Social Democracy before 1914. Born in 1848, Botev, like Marković, won a Russian scholarship to study in Odessa where he too fell under the influence of the populists. At the time, despite numerous peasant revolts, Bulgaria remained firmly within the Ottoman Empire. The population consisted overwhelmingly of smallholding peasants, but with a layer of wealthy village elders who often served as moneylenders to the peasants and tax collectors for the Turkish authorities. As such, these *chorbadzhis* were detested by the population at large. Botev gave the national liberation struggle of the early 1870s a corresponding social dimension, arguing that liberation entailed freeing the peasant not only from Ottoman oppression but also from the *chorbadzhis*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Botev's writings were not as sophisticated as those of Marković, notwithstanding the latter's eclecticism. As one academic commentator has noted, Botev did not seem 'to have pursued the agrarian socialism of Chernyshevskii and Marković at any length, or to have considered adapting it to Bulgarian conditions'.⁹

Botev was also a fervent supporter of the idea of a Balkan federation. The central feature of his writings on this question was to warn of the dangers that expansive Balkan nationalisms posed for the equality of the peoples of the peninsula and their freedom from predatory imperialisms. The article that appears below, 'On Discord Among the Balkan Peoples' of March 1875, contains a succinct statement of this view.¹⁰ Following an uprising in Bosnia against Ottoman rule in 1875, the Bulgarian April Uprising broke out in 1876, and Botev enthusiastically threw himself into the struggle. At the head of a band of some 200 men, he seized an Austrian steamer on the Danube and entered Bulgaria to join the uprising, only to be killed in a skirmish with Turkish troops.

No introduction to Svetozar Marković and Hristo Botev would be complete without a comparison of their views on the national question in the Balkans with those of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, for whom Tsarist Russia was the arch gendarme of reaction in Europe to be resolutely opposed at every turn.¹¹ Only too aware of the fact that the South Slavs looked upon the Tsar as their potential saviour from Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule, Marx and Engels opposed their national liberation struggle for fear that any such uprising in the Balkans would serve only as a Trojan horse for the advance of Russia towards Constantinople.

9. Ellen C Hadjidian, *A Comparison of the Thoughts of Early Bulgarian and Serbian Radicals 1867-1876* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980), p238. Hadjidian also comments that Botev 'made his points in his writings by emotional force, not by reason. Logical arguments were not his strong point. He stated his case in dramatic phrases which, although extremely effective in poetry, tended at times to make his prose sound like a collection of slogans.' (p51) Despite some understandable exaggeration, this assessment contains a good dose of truth.

10. As this article demonstrates, Botev was not as critical of Bulgarian as he was of Greek, Romanian and Serbian nationalisms, for the main reason that, unlike the others, Bulgaria did not yet have a state of its own, and was still firmly under Ottoman rule.

11. Their views are explored further in Section II, Marxism and the Eastern Question: Challenging the Orthodoxy 1896-97.

For this reason, it is clear that Marx and Engels would have regarded Marković and Botev's vision of the South Slav struggle leading to the creation of a Balkan federation as unrealistic, if not utopian. For Marx and Engels, an objective assessment of the political situation demonstrated that the inevitable outcome of the South Slav struggle would instead be the expansion of the Russian Empire into the Balkans and the fall of Constantinople.

Indeed, short of revolution in Vienna and Constantinople which could have transformed the ramshackle Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires into bourgeois strongholds against both Tsarist Russia and the South Slavs, it is clear where Marx and Engels stood. For them, the only justification for Austria-Hungary's existence was to serve as a bulwark against Russia,¹² and they both enthusiastically supported the Ottomans against Russia in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. This war, the direct consequence of the Bosnian uprising of 1875, in which many of Marković's supporters participated,¹³ and the Bulgarian uprising of 1876, in which Botev was killed, resoundingly confirmed the validity of Marx and Engels' position. Russia exploited the uprisings to declare war on the Ottomans, and only the threat of intervention by Britain and Austria-Hungary prevented catastrophic defeat and decisive Tsarist control of the Balkans.¹⁴

Marx and Engels also recognised that, in the era of bourgeois revolutions, the victory of the Russian colossus in the Balkans would have been disastrous for the cause of European revolutionary democracy. Of course, Marković and Botev had no love for Tsarist Russia, but they did not regard its threat as any more dangerous than that of Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary. For all the power of their revolutionary idealism, Marković and Botev therefore failed to approach the national question in the Balkans from this wider, all-European perspective and to adapt their politics accordingly.

In an historical period dominated by Tsarist Russia as the arch-enemy of revolution in Europe, the reality is that there could be no real dialogue between these two positions. In fact, only when this historical period, and thus the Russian danger, had been superseded by new historical circumstances could real dialogue finally begin. And a new historical period was to dawn only in the last 20 years of the nineteenth century when Tsarist Russia was supplanted by Austria-Hungary as the greatest danger in the Balkans, and when the era of bourgeois revolutions had been supplanted by that of imperialism. In this new historical period, the idea of a Balkan federation could be advanced realistically as a bulwark against Russia, now much weakened by internal developments and im-

12. Frederick Engels 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism' (1890), *MECW*, Volume 27, p47.

13. Marković had died five months earlier.

14. The Bulgarian Uprising was brutally crushed within a month by the Turks, who massacred many Bulgarians. See Misha Glenn *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (London, 1999), pp107-12. The British Liberal and four times Prime Minister, William Gladstone (1809-1898), famously took up the Bulgarian cause with his pamphlet *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (1876) in which he attacked the pro-Ottoman foreign policy of Benjamin Disraeli, the then Prime Minister. By contrast, Engels wrote to Marx dismissively referring to the 'hullabaloo about TURKISH ATROCITIES' which had 'done the Russians a signal service' (*MECW*, Volume 45, p140).

perialist competition. It is therefore no accident that the ideas of Marković and Botev were taken up in the first decade of the twentieth century by a new generation of Balkan socialists who were dedicated followers of Marx and Engels. Dragan Plavšić

Svetozar Marković Serbia in the East Conclusion (1872)¹⁵

THE idea that revolution is the only legal foundation for and the only possible road to the formation of a new Serbian state has put down deep roots among all educated members of the Serbian people — as much among the sons of the oppressed Christian subjects in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Old Serbia as among the citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and Austria-Hungary.

But once revolution is accepted as the legal foundation of a new Serbian state, then the right to statehood of the independent Serbian statelets of Serbia and Montenegro ceases, these states themselves cease to exist, and what remains is the whole Serbian people as an assembly of separate individuals who can establish a new legal order by general agreement.

To bring about this situation on the Balkan Peninsula, and to destroy all the state shackles that divide and oppress the Serbian people — *that is indeed the main task of Serbia.*

Someone might say that Serbia is a law-abiding country, a legitimate monarchy, that must respect foreign laws and the legal order. Serbia must not destroy all legal bonds and create 'anarchy' and 'barbarism', but then expect a legal order to develop out of such chaos.

Whoever speaks like this neither wants nor can achieve Serbian unity, let alone the freedom of the Serbian people.

'Serbia' — is neither the prince nor the ministers, neither chiefs nor captains, neither judges nor village heads, neither government departments nor offices; Serbia — is the Serbian people who live in Serbia, according to whose will, or better still, upon whose *forbearance* the prince and the ministers, the authorities and the entire present state order exist. When men whose brains have been cast in bureaucratic forms utter 'Serbia', under that name they always think of official Serbia (if I can call her that), that is to say, that administrative tool by which the Serbian people are ruled, including all laws, orders, regulations, etc. But by the name of Serbia, we mean the people who live in Serbia, the people who at the

15. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavšić.

beginning of this century started the *revolution* in Turkey, who started the struggle for the liberation of the whole Serbian people from foreign rule.¹⁶ Had they recognised the legality of the Turkish order, they would never have started the Serbian revolution. The task and duty of the people is to extend their revolution, even against the will of all those in whose interest it is that the present state order in Serbia be maintained, or at least that the state right of present-day Serbia be considered inviolable.

What happened in Serbia at the beginning of this century, when the Serbian people demolished Turkish state laws but had none of their own, and when a time of lawlessness arose in Serbia? Did then anarchy and barbarism take hold of Serbia? They did not — on the contrary, the Serbian people were at once able to create a state order that was far better than the state order of the Turkish empire and, what is more, far better in essence than the present-day bureaucratic order.

We have no cause to believe that the same thing will happen today, if only because today the Serbian people have been through a long and bitter schooling in state experience, and so would surely not accept, under the name of civilisation, foreign forms and laws, as they once did in the principality of the Šumadija.¹⁷ By means of revolution the Serbian people can liberate their patriarchal institutions,¹⁸ the remnants of their bygone civilisation, from the pressure of Turkish tyranny, and equally from the pressure of foreign forms. The Serbian people can gain the possibility of raising up on the basis of their popular institutions and ideas, and on the basis of contemporary science, an original, Slavic social edifice. They can found a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity — to which all progressive peoples in the world today aspire.

Without any doubt the Serbian monarchy played a very significant rôle in the life of the Serbian people. By destroying the council oligarchy,¹⁹ it extinguished the interference of Turkey and of foreign states in Serbian domestic affairs; it founded an independent Serbian policy; under its rule, Serbia built up its own military force and armoury, and attained political importance in the Balkan Peninsula and in the whole of Europe. Under its rule, Serbia became strong enough to influence events in the Balkan Peninsula decisively. But with this the Serbian monarchy exhausted its rôle. Every further attempt on its part to maintain itself as the ruling system in the new Serbian state would be an attempt directed against the freedom and progress of the Serbian people.

16. Marković here refers to the Serbian Revolution of 1804-12 and 1815-17 against Ottoman rule, mass peasant uprisings that began the century-long struggle for liberation from foreign rule.

17. The semi-autonomous Serbian principality that emerged from the 1804 Revolution was based on the territorial heartland of the uprising against the Turks in central Serbia, the Šumadija, literally, the land of forests.

18. Marković is here referring to the South Slav *zadrugs*, for which see the Introduction to this Section.

19. A 17-member Council, imposed on semi-autonomous Serbia by the Ottomans in 1838, and composed of wealthy Serbian oligarchs, effectively ran the country in the 1840s and 1850s and was the object of much foreign intrigue. In 1860, its powers were much reduced and subordinated to those of the ruling Prince Mihailo Obrenović (1823-1868). Although Marković saw this step as progressive, he was fiercely opposed to the militarist Greater Serbian expansionism of the Prince.

The Serbian people in Turkey scarcely number more than 2.5 million. And two dynasties want to divide this small number of people between them!²⁰ But let's say that, as the more powerful state, Serbia maintains her ascendancy and directly annexes the other Serbian lands — what kind of future would such a small statelet have?

The Balkan Peninsula is a mosaic of different peoples. The greatest in number are the Bulgarians; then, almost equal, come the Serbs and Greeks, and then the Turks, the Albanians and the Vlachs.²¹ Which of these peoples will agree to be 'annexed' by *the Serbian monarchy*? Let's assume that the Serbian monarchy wins over the other Serbs who live in Austria-Hungary to its state — even then this will still be a small kingdom of five million people! Could such a state annex more than 10 million people of other nationalities? But would not this be something that would look just like today's Austria or Hungary, which, in the opinion of the Serbian statesmen themselves, cannot be! Is it worthwhile for the Serbian nation to fight for such an absurdity just because some Serbian statesmen have developed a desire to ape Cavour or Bismarck?

No! No! Serbia must not be allowed to be sacrificed to the interest of one family, or better still — to the interests of several power-hungry politicians. The Serbian people have no other way out but revolution in the Balkan Peninsula, a revolution that would end in the destruction of all the states that today obstruct the unification of the Balkan nations as *free peoples and workers with equal rights*, as a federation of communes — districts — states — as befits them best.

The state power Serbia today exercises belongs to the Serbian people who live there. There is no more profitable way in which the Serbian people can wield this power *for their own benefit* than by bringing about wholesale revolution in Turkey and by achieving through revolution the complete liberation — of their own and their other oppressed brothers.

Will the Serbian people understand this task of theirs?

Svetozar Marković Slav Austria and Serb Unity²²

IF one observes the movement of 'nationalities' in the whole of Europe, but especially in Austria, one can discern two altogether different trends smuggled in under the title of 'the national question'. In the struggle of the Italians for

20. The Obrenović dynasty (later the Karadjordjević dynasty) that ruled Serbia, and the Petrović dynasty that ruled Montenegro, vied with each other for leadership of the Serbian national cause at this time.

21. Curiously, Marković does not include the Romanians in this list.

22. *Rudnik (The Worker)*, 27 and 29 July 1871. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić.

their unity, in the uprising of the Hungarians from 1848 until today, in the Serb uprising of the same year, and in the uprising in Boka,²³ as in all uprisings within the Turkish Empire — one and the same driving force, one and the same aspiration have been reflected everywhere: every nation that rises up against *foreign oppressors* has set out to liberate itself from political and social burdens, from fines, violence, unfair courts, tyranny in public and private life. But at the same time, every nation has set out to ensure the right to its own language, its own religion, its own customs, and in general those national traits that characterise a nation. Hatred for the foreigner was at the same time hatred for authority and hatred for tyrants who had power over the people. Under the slogan of liberation from the 'foreign yoke', the people have always understood this as liberation from 'yokes' in general, that is, total political and social freedom.

This same aspiration is reflected in the struggle of the oppressed nations of Austria in our own time. The mass of the people expect that, with the collapse of 'Germanism' and 'Magyarism', all the woes from which the people suffer will at once disappear: the Austrian master, for whose sake nations have fought so many times with other nations who have done nothing to them; the army that mows down the flower of the nation; unbearable taxes that destroy the nation; that there will be an end to the tyranny of 'supreme power' and the utterly insolent robbery of its hired agencies; that national education will replace foreign education, for which the people had no use, etc. In a word, nations see in the struggle for nationality the struggle for political freedom, education and well-being, that is, for social progress.

This movement for 'nationality' is good and true. This movement is always progressive — revolutionary. Where nations are free politically and socially, for example, in Switzerland, there are no aspirations for national unification — there is no 'national question'.

Alongside this progressive movement for national liberation, one can always perceive another movement. Rulers, *spahs*,²⁴ bishops, ministers, candidates for ministerial posts, and in general the upper layers of society, always mix this movement up with the struggle for 'historic rights', for 'state unity', for 'state independence', etc. They work to bring back the old state form under which the people once lived and in which they had a dominant position over the nation. Or, if there had never been such state forms, they want to create them. Under the slogan of 'nationality', they do not seek the liberation of the people, but a change in the form of their slavery; they do not want to take a step forward in the history of the nation, but a step back. This is how Czech, Hungarian and Croat aristocrats fight for the 'historic rights' of the Czech, Hungarian and Croat

23. The Italians and the Hungarians played a progressive rôle when they rose up for their national rights against the Habsburgs in the revolutions of 1848. However, the Serbs played a reactionary rôle; they rose up against the Hungarians and in support of Vienna. Boka Kotorska (Bay of Kotar), today in Montenegro, then part of Austria-Hungary, was where an uprising broke out against Habsburg rule in 1869-70.

24. *Spah* is a Turkish word referring to an Ottoman feudal horseman who also held land and serfs from the Sultan. Marković is here using it in the sense of a wealthy landowner.

crown. For these reasons, they are joined by the majority of the church's notables. Both one and the other aspire to bring back the old historic state system, and in this way to bring back their system of rule. In the whole struggle for the national principle in Austria, one can always detect these two currents in the struggle against 'centralisation', against 'Germanism' and 'Magyarism'. The representatives of the true popular current have not known how to separate the national cause from the interests of the aristocrats because it was unclear to them what in fact the people wanted in order to reach a solution to the national question; or out of 'political' considerations they have supported the aristocratic party, in order more easily to destroy the centralists, that is to say, that party in Austria which wants to maintain the unity of the government and state administration, and thus at the same time the dominant position of the Germans in Austria.

Ever since the parliamentary struggle for internal change began in Austria (after the Italian war),²⁵ there has been endless confusion among the political parties, a lack of clarity about their goals and a vagueness about their principles. The national principle negates all historic rights. Anyone who wants to take the national principle as the basis on which to organise relations between the various nations and the state in Austria, would have to deny not only the historic state rights of Hungary, Croatia, Bohemia and the other Austrian lands, but would also have to deny the right of the ruling Austrian family to govern, and to succeed to the various crownlands.

With liberation from foreign oppression, nations have expected their situation to get better, that life would become more harmonious, rational and happy — in fact, they have expected a new kind of life. It is obvious that this could not come about until the state structure in Austria is overthrown.

To solve the national question in Austria in the true sense, it is therefore necessary to demolish the Habsburg monarchy which has been patched together by marriages, inheritances and various agreements, and which maintains itself with Jesuit lies and brute military strength. Not a single party in Austria has dared come out publicly with this programme. Instead, a kind of 'federalism' of nations is proposed, which is really a monstrously distorted federalism. The Czechs were the first to propose this type of federalism. They want a league of nations in Austria, but at the same time they seek acceptance of the 'state right' of the Bohemian crown, although in Bohemia a good third of the population is German. In fact, the Czechs want a league of historic states, that is to say, those states that once used to exist under one ruler. They want something like the old German Confederation,²⁶ with the difference that instead of several rulers the various states of this Austrian league would have one Austrian Emperor, who

25. The Italian war of 1859-61 that united most of Italy under the leadership of the Kingdom of Piedmont.

26. The German Confederation was created at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 from a welter of German principalities. It was a bastion of feudal particularism against centralised authority, with no supreme ruler and a weak parliament in Frankfurt. It was destroyed in Bismarck's drive to unify Germany.

would also be king in a number of separate lands; and instead of the league's capital in Frankfurt, there would be a parliament made up of 'delegations' in Vienna. The Poles of Galicia and the Croats want this type of federalism; the Hungarians would accept it only if the historic right of Croatia were not in the way. This is why we said in the second issue of *Radenik* that this type of federalism was the worst state form imaginable.²⁷

There are people who understand what this type of federalism means, but think that it is a shortcut to Austria's collapse. They think that when each crownland becomes autonomous, when the power that binds them to the whole has been reduced, and especially when the military power held mainly by the supreme government in Austria has been reduced, then at the first clash with a foreign enemy or some uprising in the country, the Austrian state structure will collapse.

We believe these calculations are utterly wrong. Austria's statesmen gave way to the Hungarians when they had to, but now dominate the other nations in Hungary with their help. They gave way to the Czechs and Poles, and so won them over to guaranteeing the Austrian state, that is to being enemies of the other nations, thereby prolonging Austria's life for an indefinite period. It should not be forgotten that, as one of their leaders (Palacký) stated publicly many times, the Old Czech party most sincerely professes the belief that Austria is necessary to the Slavs.²⁸ As for the Young Czech party, it seems to us that it is the same as the 'left' in Hungary, that is to say, it seeks just a bit more state autonomy and a bit more internal freedom than the Old Czechs.²⁹

In these parliamentary struggles, the Serb nation is in the worst position. In line with 'historic' right, it is split into several state regions. One part is directly under the Hungarian crown, another part is under the Croatian crown, and a third — in Dalmatia — has again come directly under the rule of the Austrian

27. The present article was written in response to the negative reaction that had greeted an earlier article by Marković entitled 'Slav Austria' of 5 July 1871, which had, in fact, appeared in the third issue of *Radenik*, and not the second.

28. František Palacký (1798-1876) was the leading Czech historian and politician of his day who supported an Austro-Slav conception of a federal Austria. In 1848, he proposed the transformation of the Austrian Empire into a federation of nationalities, but by the 1860s he was advocating a federation based on autonomous historic crownlands. In September 1871, two months after this article appeared, Palacký held secret talks with the conservative federalist Prime Minister, Count von Hohenwart, for an autonomous Czech region based on the historic lands of the Bohemian crown. Palacký once famously remarked that 'if the Austrian Empire had not already existed for a long time, the interests of Europe and the interests of humanity would demand its speedy creation' (quoted in Robert A Kann, *The Multinational Empire* (New York, 1950), Volume 2, p137).

29. The Old Czechs were the political representatives of the Bohemian nobility, while the Young Czechs represented the new Czech bourgeoisie. Marković's assessment that there were no essential differences between them on the national question is borne out by Kann himself, who observes, 'the basic differences between the Old and Young Czech programs... do not consist in fundamental disagreement on the question of the indivisibility of the Bohemian lands as implied in the *Staatsrecht* (historic right)' (RA Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, op cit, Volume 1, p193).

imperial house. The Serb nation is left to fight divided for its national autonomy not in the state, but in local councils, courts, schools — everywhere in public life. It has had to fight against the Italians, the Germans and the Hungarians. Understandably, in these local struggles, it could not come out with a general programme which would solve all aspects of the position of the Serb people in Austria-Hungary. It was a struggle pure and simple for its day-to-day existence. And those who argued over what solving the national question in fact meant could not come out publicly with their programme. *True federalism based on nations*, that is to say, where each nation in Austria forms a separate body and where the nations themselves form a federal state — this it stated to be its principle many times, although during the parliamentary struggles it could not distance itself from the standpoint of 'legitimacy'. Besides this, it is to its credit that in all political and social questions it is among the most progressive parties in Hungary.³⁰

The 'federalism' the Serb national party wants in Austria is altogether different from the federalism of the Czechs, Croats and Poles. The Serb national party wants a league of nations, and not a league of historic states. But anyone well acquainted with the situation in Hungary and Austria has to acknowledge that a 'league of nations' in Austria cannot be established without overthrowing the Austrian Empire and the Hungarian kingdom, that is to say, it cannot be achieved without an internal revolution in Austria-Hungary. The Serb national party was caught between two opposing views: either to adopt a revolutionary standpoint and to declare its principles openly, completely casting aside its own 'historic rights' and those of others; or to twist its principles and retreat from them, to remain on the 'legal' standpoint of historic rights and other state laws, and in this way to manoeuvre between Vienna, Budapest and Zagreb.

We shall not criticise the policy of the Serb national party in Austria-Hungary. Our intention here is just to show that the present 'Slav', 'federative' Austria which is being drawn up by some Czech newspapers and which the Czechs, Poles and Croats are aiming for, is a *backward step in the history of the Austrian nations*, and that at the present time such an Austria would be much worse, more confused and impossible than a 'centralised' or 'dualist' Austria. At the same time, we wanted to explain what a real federalism of nations is. And we have come to the conclusion that a league of nations in Austria can come into being when all the historic rights, upon which the rule of the Germans and the Hungarians over the other Austrian nations rests, have been

30. Marković is here referring to the United Serbian Youth (formed in 1866) and the Serbian National Freethinkers Party (or Liberals, formed in 1869) of Vojvodina, then a province ruled by Hungary, today in Serbia and Montenegro. Both agitated for Serb rights, with the United Serbian Youth in particular adopting a revolutionary programme and support for a Balkan federation. The Liberals were, however, increasingly bedevilled by internal strife between Serb legitimists (who wanted to do a deal with the empire) and those who did not, splitting the party in the 1880s. This tension was personified by its leader, the outstanding liberal nationalist, Svetozar Miletić (1826-1901), who published in Hungary those of Marković's writings that ironically could not appear in Serbia. In the next paragraph, Marković attacks these burgeoning legitimist tendencies.

destroyed, and when the whole military-bureaucratic state machine, which holds these nations in submission, has been crushed — in a word, *when present-day Austria disappears*.

Thus conclusion, which no-one has dared to express in Austria, we have considered it our duty to state publicly and openly over here. The Serb people in Austria and Serbia must understand once and for all what their real goal is, and then adapt their 'policy' towards Austria accordingly.

Nor shall we here discuss only the negative side of our main theme. We say only that Austria has to disappear — but what will come after it? When all the oppressed nations liberate themselves, what type of state or league of states shall these individual nations establish? We shall not enter into a lengthy discussion of how the nations of Austria ought to organise themselves, but shall discuss the Serb nation alone.

Everyone who has followed all aspects of the movement of the whole life of the Serb people will have observed everywhere one common aspiration: for the various parts of the Serb nation to get to know each other, to inform each other of how they are *one* nation divided, crushed and strangled by foreign power, and for action to be undertaken in all areas so they can come together and unite wherever possible. And in most recent times one common idea has taken root, not only in our literature but also, if not even more so, in the whole Serb nation, and that is: the *political unification* of the Serb people. Serbs from Montenegro, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Serbia, Austria-Hungary, etc, want to create a *Serb state*.

We have already said what we think about the national idea and the aspiration of oppressed nations to throw off foreign rule. Here we only draw attention to one significant phenomenon in the life of the European nations. In Switzerland, three different nations, Germans, French and Italians, live together, among whom there never appears any 'aspiration' for unity with their brothers in a 'Greater' Germany, France or Italy. The reason for this is obviously that the political and social institutions in Switzerland are far more perfect than in the aforementioned monarchies. When the question of national unification was at its height in Italy and Germany, in Switzerland no one thought of 'uniting' with this nation or that. When a nation is well off within a country, the people do not aspire to unity. This phenomenon further confirms what we have already said about what people expect from unity. They expect freedom from every tyranny, and they expect education and material well-being — in a word, they think that only in their own state will they stop being slaves and start to live.

From Istanbul to Vienna, the idea of Serb unity is the most revolutionary idea there is on the Balkan Peninsula. This idea entails the destruction of Turkey and Austria, the end of Serbia and Montenegro *as independent principalities*, and a revolution in the whole political structure of the Serb nation. Out of parts of these two empires and the two Serb principalities, a new Serb state can come into being — this is what Serb unity means.

We know that many narrow-minded people will be horrified when they read these words: 'the most revolutionary', 'the end of the principality of Serbia',

'revolution', etc, but in fact this is what the idea of Serb unity means. Austria and Turkey cannot be demolished without revolution, and a new Serb state cannot be established while the principalities of Serbia and Montenegro continue to exist. This must be clear to everyone who wants to speak of Serb unity.

Hristo Botev

On Discord Among the Balkan Peoples³¹

WE are now already in a position to say something regarding a problem that has so far received little attention in our press, or if it has been broached then what has been said has all been superficial, not to the point and sometimes even tendentious. We are talking about the situation of our people in relation to those small statelets that are preparing to take over the mantle of Turkey and that are called upon by history to create the Danubian confederation we want and need on the basis of free, democratic principles. For the sake of consistency, we should really make a short survey of all that has been said so far on the issue, but since this is not a historical survey we can well leave this for more a more convenient time, and go straight to the matter at hand.

The idea of South Slav unity has gained universal acceptance by almost all the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula (with the exception of the Turkish people), and little by little has become popular even among mutually hostile elements within these nations. Europe has taken notice of this joyous event in our life, and has gradually come to the conviction that each one of these nations is capable of being master in its own house, and of independently managing both its moral and political affairs.

Indeed, recently the Eastern Question has entered its most violent phase, and awaits only the first signal of the revolution to become the order of the day. What's more, even without this signal, we find that Europe has started redrawing our frontiers, and has almost defined the boundaries of each one of the tribes concerned. Almost the whole European press is at one in supposing that Russia, Prussia and Austria have already agreed amongst themselves to set up a trilateral court to divide the wealth of the dying man among his extremely impatient heirs. Of course, if the judges refuse to take bribes (and this is highly doubtful), that is to say, if they do not hunger after Bosnia and Herzegovina, Constantinople or the mouth of the Danube, and if they ignore the rights and

31. *Zname (The Banner)*, 28 March 1875. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković and Souška Alton.

borders of the tribes most directly concerned, that is to say, if they let Serbia fulfil its patriotic dreams of Dušan's Empire,³² Greece to annex Albania and Macedonia, and Romania to look for Emperor Trajan's³³ descendants even in the huts of Gabrovo,³⁴ then the Eastern Question will of course be resolved in an unjust manner, and such a solution will lead to a repetition of that terrible, insane and damaging historical struggle that brought Turkey into Europe, and which could very easily bring other uninvited guests, or more precisely, another civilised horde from the North or from the East to the Balkan Peninsula. In this respect, 'The Testament of Peter the Great'³⁵ and the German 'Drang nach Osten'³⁶ are of great significance for us. But it is obvious that the statesmen of Serbia, Greece and Romania pay absolutely no attention to the lessons of history. Serbia with its idiotic propaganda in the north-west of our country³⁷ over the course of the last decade, propaganda which, to the shame and disgrace of the Serbian people, still continues even now, has convinced us that under the veil of South Slav unity it seeks to feather its own nest, and does not care one jot about the existence of the Bulgarian people. Greece, that traditional enemy of everything Slav, in spite of its inability to manage its own affairs, has schemed with the aim of spreading the influence of her nationality all the way to the Balkan Mountains, and in this respect it has competed successfully with the Serbian patriots. As for Romania, which throughout her existence has sustained her nationality by Romanising foreign elements, especially the Bulgarians, today pursues with even greater energy its 'enterprise in the East'. It persecutes the Bulgarian nationality in Bessarabia, prevents our immigrants in Romania from helping their oppressed and enslaved homeland, and systematically pours all foreign elements (except the Germans) into the pot of its Daco-Roman³⁸ culture. As for Romania and Greece, their conduct towards the 'slaves in Turkey' is to some extent forgivable if we take into account that even now they fear Pan Slavism; but as for Serbia, her conduct towards 'the Bulgarian brothers'³⁹ is stupid, disgusting and even inexplicable so far as the creation of a free Danubian, Balkan or South-Slavic federation is concerned. That's why when we analyse the relations between the nations on the Balkan Peninsula, we shall pay spe-

32. Stefan Dušan (1308-1355) was king of Serbia (1331-46) and 'Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks' (1346-55). He was medieval Serbia's greatest ruler whose short-lived empire was used by the nationalists to justify expansion of the modern Serbian state.

33. Trajan (AD53-117) was the Roman emperor (AD98-117) who conquered Dacia, an area roughly corresponding to today's Romania. Romanian nationalists buttressed their territorial claims by asserting their descent from Daco-Roman colonists (modern Romanian is derived from the Latin spoken by these colonists, despite many Slav additions).

34. Gabrovo was a town in the north-central heart of what would shortly become Bulgaria. Botev is here ridiculing the expansionist desires of Romanian nationalism.

35. This 'Testament' allegedly outlined the expansionist strategy the successors of Peter the Great (1672-1725), Tsar of Russia (1682-1721), were to follow after his death, especially with regard to Ottoman Turkey. In all likelihood, however, it was a forgery. Nevertheless, its plausibility for many, including Botev, was underpinned by the reality of Russian expansion.

36. Literally, 'Drive to the East', the German policy of colonising the Slav lands of the east.

37. Botev is referring to Ottoman Macedonia.

38. In Serbian in the original text.

cial attention to Serbia, and will try to determine as impartially as we can her attitude to our people. For now we will only say that, until the nature of these relations becomes clear and they become more equal, no agreement or unification whatsoever is possible between these two brotherly, neighbouring and Slavic peoples.

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II: Marxism and the Eastern Question: Challenging the Orthodoxy, 1896-97

Introduction

THE so-called Eastern Question, raised by the decaying state of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, dominated international politics in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For Marx and Engels, the prospect of Ottoman collapse posed the grave danger that Tsarist Russia, the arch-enemy of revolutionary democracy, would be able to advance unopposed into the Balkans to the gates of Constantinople.¹ For this reason, they flatly opposed the anti-Ottoman national struggle of the Balkan peoples, who looked expectantly to the Tsar to liberate them. In 1896-97, however, a new generation of Marxists challenged this orthodoxy by arguing that, as circumstances had changed, the greatest obstacle to Russia's advance on Constantinople would now be the victory of the national struggle of the Balkan peoples. This section is devoted to the debate they provoked.

The origins of Marx and Engels' attitude to Russia lie in the revolutionary events of 1848. In that year, the revolutions that swept Europe also engulfed the Austrian Habsburg Empire. In Hungary, the revolutionary nationalist, Lajos Kossuth,² led the struggle for freedom from the Habsburgs, which Marx and Engels enthusiastically supported. At the same time, they resolutely opposed the counter-revolutionary movement of the South Slavs, the Croats and the Serbs,

1. 'It is to the credit of Karl Marx that he was the first to stress, and repeatedly did so from 1848, that the West European workers' party is obliged... to wage a life-and-death struggle against Russian Tsardom.' (Frederick Engels, 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom' (1890), *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Volume 27, p14n)
2. Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894) was one of the great revolutionary figures of 1848-49 who came to lead the Hungarian struggle as it radicalised under Austrian attack. He fled from Hungary after the revolution's defeat and died in exile.

who lived mainly in the Hungarian part of the Empire, but whose hatred for their immediate Hungarian overlords ensured their loyalty to the Habsburgs. The Croatian leader, Ban Jelačić, encouraged by duplicitous Habsburg backing for Slav national rights, led a South Slav army into inconclusive battle against the Hungarians before breaking off to assist in the bloody suppression of the resurgent revolution in Vienna.³ After an appeal for help from the Habsburgs, the 150 000 strong army of Tsarist Russia crossed into Hungary in 1849, where the revolutionary movement was rapidly defeated.

Marx and Engels drew two basic conclusions about Russia from this defeat. The first was to recognise that feudal absolutist Russia, as yet unencumbered by any revolutionary movement, had the political will, as well as the military capacity, to place a mass reserve army of reaction in the field against revolution in Europe. No other power, neither the unwieldy Austrian nor the disintegrating Ottoman Empires, could match this capacity. In the era of bourgeois revolutions, Russia, more than any other power, would have to be stopped by any means necessary. The second conclusion they drew was that the pan-Slavic sympathies of the South Slav national movement meant that 'the instrument of liberation and the bond of unity is the Russian *knout*'. This national movement would have to be opposed at all costs to prevent 'the creation of a Slav state under Russian domination'.⁴ For the same reasons, Marx and Engels were enthusiastic supporters of the national struggle of the Poles against Russia.

These two conclusions were to dominate Marx and Engels' attitude to Russia for the rest of their lives. During the Crimean War of 1853-56, fought by Britain, France, Turkey and Piedmont-Sardinia against Russia, Marx and Engels attacked the Western powers for fighting a 'sham war', and hoped that a new revolutionary wave would carry the struggle to Russia to the bitter end. In 1877-78, when war erupted between Russia and Turkey in the Balkans, Marx and Engels took the side of the Turks. Engels wrote that he would be 'delighted if the Russians take a pasting',⁵ while Marx praised the 'gallant Turks'.⁶ Marx wrote to their friend and associate, the German socialist leader, Wilhelm Liebknecht, that 'we are most decidedly espousing the Turkish cause' on the basis that the defeat of Russia would expedite social revolution there.⁷ Liebknecht promptly ap-

3. Ban Josip Jelačić (1801-1859) died a disappointed stooge of the Habsburgs, who gratefully erected a statue of him in Zagreb. Tito's Yugoslav Communists dismantled it in 1945, but Croatia's nationalist President, Franjo Tudjman, re-erected it in 1990.
4. Frederick Engels, 'The Magyar Struggle' (1849), *MECW*, Volume 8, pp233, 235.
5. Letter to Philipp Pauli, 11 April 1877, *MECW*, Volume 45, p216. Engels overestimated Ottoman capacity to resist Russia. In fact, they were badly defeated, and Russia was only prevented from making greater gains by threats from Britain and Austria-Hungary.
6. Letter to Friedrich Adolph Sorge, 27 September 1877, *MECW*, Volume 45, p276. Marx also secretly advised the pro-Turkish party in England. In a letter to Thomas Allsop of 1 January 1878, he revealed his involvement in organising a demonstration, and how he had entered into 'very strange relations... with British Grandees who would get into a white rage if they had the least suspicion under whose advice they were acting' (*MECW*, Volume 45, p292).
7. Letter to Wilhelm Liebknecht, 4 February 1878, *MECW*, Volume 45, p296. The first reason Marx gives for supporting the Turks is hollow, that the Turkish peasant was 'indubitably one of the ablest and most moral representatives of the peasantry in Europe'.

pended the letter to the second edition of his 1878 pamphlet entitled *On the Eastern Question, or: Shall Europe Become Cossacks?*⁸ in which he dismissed South Slav oppression as '99 per cent a Russian lie' and 'one per cent a Russian manufacture'.⁹ The ultimate defeat of the Ottomans was blamed by Marx and Engels on the failure of the Turks to stir up revolution in Constantinople and so bring to power a regime that would be an effective bulwark against Russia.

During the 1880s, this position remained essentially unchanged, but it underwent a shift in emphasis based on two new closely-related elements: the increasing threat of world war, and the danger this posed for the success of the rising revolutionary movement in Europe, including Russia. In 1882, following another uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the German Marxists, Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, clearly sympathetic to it, solicited Engels' views. Engels wrote to Bernstein that the South Slavs 'remain the handy men of Tsarism, and poetical sympathies have no place in politics', but also warned of the danger that the uprising could lead to world war and 'run our whole revolutionary situation'.¹⁰ More convincingly, he explained to Kautsky that he had 'damned little' sympathy for the South Slavs, adding that 'only after the collapse of Tsardom, when the national aspirations of these dwarf-peoples cease to be mixed up with pan-Slavic tendencies to world domination, only then can we allow them to be free'¹¹ — an approach that has a direct contemporary parallel in the rôle played by the Kosovan Albanians as the 'handy men' of the United States during the bombing of Serbia in 1999.

However, following the Congress of Berlin of 1878 when Bulgaria gained autonomy but only partial unity, there were incipient signs that Russia's power in the Balkans was beginning to wane. In 1883, Bulgaria expelled two Russian Generals the Tsar had appointed to rule the country for him. Then, in 1885, Bulgaria annexed Eastern Rumelia (today, southern Bulgaria) in an act of unifi-

8 *Zur orientalischen Frage, oder: Soll Europa Kosackisch werden?* (Leipzig, 1878). Liebknecht also appended another letter from Marx of 11 February 1878 (MECW, Volume 45, pp299-303). At Marx's request, the letters appeared anonymously, probably because he was secretly advising the pro-Turkish party in Britain — see note 6 above. This pamphlet contains a cruder version of Marx's position, erring in the direction of the Turcophile views of the British diplomat, writer and Tory MP, David Urquhart (1805-1877), a figure Marx was rather more circumspect about. A Berlin bank clerk and member of the German party, Hermann Löwy, attacked Liebknecht's pamphlet in his wittily entitled *Zur orientalischen Frage, oder: Soll die Sozialistische Arbeiter-partei Türkisch werden? (On the Eastern Question, or: Shall the Socialist Workers' Party Become Turkish?)* (Zürich, 1878).

9 Quoted in DB Riazanov, *Marx and Anglo-Russian Relations and Other Writings*, translated by Brian Pearce (London, 2002), p205. The Marxist scholar, David Riazanov (1870-1938), claimed that Liebknecht's pamphlet did not reflect Marx and Engels' views, but, despite its Urquhartism, they would surely not have had any fundamental disagreements with it at the time, as Pearce rightly argues (*ibid*, pp205-7).

10 Letter to Bernstein, 22 and 25 February 1882, MECW, Volume 46, pp203-4.

11 Letter to Kautsky, 7 February 1882, MECW, Volume 46, p194. Engels was altogether more tactful about this in public. In his 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom' (1890), he wrote sympathetically of revolution in Russia allowing the Balkan nations 'to order their internal affairs according to their own necessities and wishes' (MECW, Volume 27, p47).

cation that was strongly opposed by Russia, but was supported by Britain. The Tsar was deeply angered by these moves, which demonstrated the growing capacity of the new Balkan states to act independently of Russia.

By 1890, Engels was belatedly prepared to acknowledge the significance of these developments. In his 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom', he reaffirmed his view that Russia was 'the mainstay of European reaction', but noted 'how much the position of Russian diplomacy has changed for the worse' since 1878. In particular, he observed that 'even in the Balkan Peninsula', where Russia was once the champion of the nationalities, 'nothing seems to succeed now'. Romania and Bulgaria had become disenchanted with the Tsar, while the Austrian Slavs were gaining ground in the Habsburg Empire. These developments led Engels to conclude: 'The phrase of the emancipation of oppressed Christian nations by the almighty Tsar is played out.' The root cause of this change he located in capitalist development in Russia and the resulting weakening of Tsarist despotism. The revolution which Russia had helped to crush in 1848 was now knocking at its own door.¹²

Russia's increasing weakness and its fear of instability in the Ottoman Empire, which it increasingly felt incapable of exploiting and which threatened to inspire revolution at home, revealed itself starkly during the Armenian and Cretan uprisings of 1894-97. The Armenian uprisings of 1894-96 in the Ottoman Empire¹³ held little sympathy for the Tsar, who was also suppressing the Armenians in the Caucasus. Russia therefore chose to cooperate with the other powers in recommending reforms to the Turks that ultimately came to nothing. In 1896, the Cretan revolt against the Turks erupted, igniting the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, which the Greeks lost. Despite its traditional support for the Cretans, Russia opposed the uprising and was sympathetic to the Turks, while Britain now favoured Greece.¹⁴ Again, the Tsar cooperated with the other powers to reach a compromise solution, which saw a Greek prince become governor of Crete while the island remained within the Ottoman Empire. Before the Congress of Berlin, then, Russia had sought to exploit Ottoman frailty by force; now it sought to preserve the *status quo* in the belief that Turkey's collapse would reduce Russian power among the newly assertive and expanded Balkan states.

These events, not to mention Engels' death in 1895, created the conditions for the debate on the Eastern Question in German Social Democracy. It began with the appearance of an article in three parts by the Polish-born Marxist, Rosa Luxemburg, entitled 'The National Struggles in Turkey and Social Democracy' (8, 9 and 10 October 1896). This is the first article in the debate reproduced

12. Frederick Engels, 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom' (1890), *MECW*, Volume 27, pp44-5.

13. In 1894, Engels wrote to an Armenian, Atabekyants, restating his view that Armenian freedom from Turkey should await the downfall of Russian Tsardom. See Brian Pearce's comments in DB Ruzanov, *Marx and Anglo-Russian Relations*, op cit, p21.

14. It is worth noting how these changes were reflected ideologically. By the 1890s, Russian pan-Slavism, no longer encouraged by ruling circles, was a spent force, while British Turcophobia was being superseded by Gladstonian antipathy for the Ottomans.

below. Accepting the validity of Marx and Engels' position for their own time, Luxemburg argues that circumstances had significantly changed. After pointing out that Turkey's disintegration was rooted in its social backwardness, and not the artificial product of Russian agents, Luxemburg maintains that the separation of the Balkan nations from Turkey would encourage capitalist development and thus the growth of socialist movements in the region. These nations looked to Russia only because of Turkish suppression, while freedom from Turkey fostered distrust of Russia leading the Tsar to support Ottoman integrity. Luxemburg ends by calling for Social Democracy to break with the past and support the Christian nations in Turkey as the best means of fighting Tsarist Russia.

Within a few days of Luxemburg's article, Karl Kautsky published 'German Social Democracy and the Turkish Troubles' (14 October) by Eduard Bernstein in *Die Neue Zeit*. Bernstein's arguments were similar to Luxemburg's and he described her work, of which he had until then been unaware, as 'excellent'. His stout defence of the Armenians, whom he saw as waging a progressive, civilising struggle against Turkish backwardness, was, however, marred by a racist defence of Europe's civilising mission in Africa.¹⁵ This aspect of Bernstein's thought would resurface over the question of Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia some 10 years later.¹⁶

Wilhelm Liebknecht had refused to publish Luxemburg's article in *Vorwärts*, the newspaper he edited, and it finally appeared in the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the social democratic paper in Saxony. Criticised for refusing to do so, Liebknecht sought to defend himself in *Vorwärts* with a brief 'Statement' (11 November 1896), the second article from the debate reproduced below. This short piece restates the orthodox position on Russia, contemptuously dismisses Luxemburg for reproducing Gladstonian¹⁷ and Russian arguments, and patronisingly advises her to concern herself with Russian atrocities in Poland.

Karl Kautsky had helped to instigate Bernstein's article of 14 October 1896, which he described as 'all the more significant because Liebknecht's quite incredible stance on the question entrenches itself on the authority of Marx'. He also noted:

Liebknecht still stands on all points exactly where he stood at the time of

15. The article appears in *Marxism and Social Democracy: The Revisionist Debate 1896-1898*, edited and translated by H and JM Tudor (Cambridge, 1988), pp51-61, and is therefore not reproduced below. Of the anti-colonial struggle of the African tribes, Bernstein wrote: 'Races who are hostile to or incapable of civilisation cannot claim our sympathy when they revolt against civilisation.' (Ibid, p52) The British socialist and editor of the Social Democratic Federation's paper, *Justice*, Ernest Belfort Bax (1854-1926), replied that socialists should support Turkey (and the African tribes) against the curse of capitalism. However, his reactionary slogan 'Better slavery than capitalism' was only partly redeemed by his defence of the right of the African tribes to fight imperialism (ibid, pp61-5).

16. See Section V: The Annexation of Bosnia in 1908 by Austria-Hungary, below.

17. William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898) was four times British Liberal Prime Minister, and famously took up the Bulgarian cause in the 1870s. He was prepared to support Russia to aid the Bulgarians.

the Crimean War. But what was right then may well be wrong now, and usually is... It would be completely un-Marxlike to close one's eyes to the facts and persist in the old Marxist view.¹⁸

Kautsky then intervened personally in the debate with his article 'The Eastern Question and Social Democracy' (4 March 1897), which appeared in Liebknecht's *Vorwärts*. He argues that Marx and Engels' preference for Turkey only arose because of the dangers of Tsarism, but that they continued to hope for revolution in Constantinople. As this was not now in prospect,¹⁹ the Balkan states would have to serve as a substitute dam against Russia. Liebknecht then replied with his most substantive contribution to the debate, 'Crete and Social Democracy' (10 March), which was marked by a stridently dismissive attitude towards the nations of the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire. He shifts the focus away from the Balkans to argue that the destruction of the alliance of the 1890s between France and Russia is the central question of the day. In his response in *Die Neue Zeit* entitled 'Crete and the Russian Question' (15 March), Bernstein retorts that French popular support for the Cretans posed the greatest threat for the alliance with Russia. Supporting Turkey, therefore, would only assist the Tsar, both in the Balkans and in Europe. Edited versions of all three articles appear below.

In 1896, the Bulgarian Marxist Christian Rakovsky presented a report on the Eastern Question to the Second International's London Congress. The report was designed to correct the 'ignorance and a lack of understanding of Eastern questions' which 'were one of the defects of the international socialist movement'.²⁰ Rakovsky later set out his argument more fully in an article in the French socialist left paper, *La Petite République*,²¹ entitled 'The Eastern Question and the International Socialist Party' (April 1897). An edited extract from this article is the final item in this section. Rakovsky here examines the paradox of how reactionary Russia was allowed to play the rôle of liberator in the Balkans because of the West's commitment to Ottoman Turkey, a commitment he locates in the huge debts that the Sultan's government owed to financial interests in the West. Arguing that the West's policy in the Balkans had been an historic failure, allowing Russia to consolidate its power, Rakovsky calls for international socialism to do what the West should have done — support the struggle of the

18. Tudor, *Marxism and Social Democracy*, op cit, p82.

19. Though the Young Turk Revolution was to break out 11 years later in 1908.

20. Christian Rakovsky, 'An Autobiography', *Selected Writings on Opposition in the USSR 1923-30* edited by Gus Fagan (London and New York, 1980), pp68-9. Kautsky published the report in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1897, but its arguments closely mirror those of Luxemburg, and it is not reproduced here. In 1898, Rakovsky also published an important work on the Eastern Question in Bulgarian, *Russia in the East*, which analysed the history of Russian intervention in the Balkans.

21. *La Petite République* had just been wrested in January 1897 from the grip of the reformist Alexandre Millerand (1859-1943) by the more radical French Socialists led by Jules Guesde (1845-1922), then an important influence on Rakovsky. During the First World War, however, Guesde and Millerand were to be colleagues in the French war cabinet.

Balkan peoples for liberation from Turkey in order to win them away from the Tsar and to establish the conditions for a socialist movement in the Balkans.

Despite these assaults on Liebknecht's position, however, it is clear that his views on Russia continued to hold considerable sway in German Social Democracy. When the German Social Democratic Party voted for war credits in 1914, many saw an imperialist war as the continuation of the revolutionary struggle Marx and Engels had once waged against Russian despotism.

There is a final irony to this debate that deserves mention. Unbeknown to all the participants at the time, the arguments of those who sought to revise the classical Marxist position on Russia had been anticipated almost half a century earlier by none other than Marx and Engels themselves. In 1853, as the Crimean war loomed, Engels contributed a series of articles, under Marx's name, to the *New York Daily Tribune*, the most impressive of which was 'What is to Become of Turkey in Europe?'.²² This was their first encounter with the Eastern Question. Faced at the time with what appeared to be the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire, combined with anti-Russian stirrings in semi-independent Serbia personified by its Prime Minister, Ilija Garašanin,²³ Engels argued that maintaining Turkey in her present state would only encourage the Balkan peoples to regard the Tsar as their liberator, while their independence would encourage distrust of Russia and contact with the West.²⁴ He therefore advocated that

22. *MECW*, Volume 12, pp32-6. This article was only discovered by David Riazanov after the 1896-97 debate. He discussed it in his 1913 article 'Marx and Engels and the Balkan Question', now in DB Riazanov, *Marx and Anglo-Russian Relations*, op cit, pp190-202. In 1897, Karl Marx's daughter, Eleanor (1855-1898), and her husband, Edward Aveling (1851-1898), published a collection of Karl Marx's writings (many written by Engels, though they were unaware of this) entitled *The Eastern Question: Letters Written 1853-1856 Dealing with Events of the Crimean War* (1897, reprinted London, 1969). However, 'What is to Become of Turkey in Europe?' was omitted — unlike other articles by Engels for the *New York Daily Tribune*, which also appeared there as unsigned leaders. The failure to identify Marx (that is, Engels writing as Marx) as the author was very likely due to the article's content, which Marx/Aveling did not associate with the Karl Marx they knew as the stout defender of the Ottomans. Indeed, their own prejudices were Liebknechtian. Their editorial introduction to the collection stated: 'To-day the Russian Government... is, as it was in the "fifties", the greatest enemy of all advance, the greatest stronghold of reaction.' (Ibid, p ix) Liebknecht's 'Statement' of 11 November 1896 (see below) canvasses the idea of collecting together Marx's articles from the 1850s for German readers.
23. Ilija Garašanin (1812-1874) was Serbian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister for six months between September 1852 and March 1853, when he was dismissed at Russia's insistence. Often viewed today simply as the first Greater Serbian nationalist, his plans at this time aimed to free Serbia from the Great Powers, including Russia. As he wrote in 1852: 'I eat bread not with Russian teeth but with my own and those of my forefathers; I am not a servant of Russia.' (Quoted in David MacKenzie, *Ilija Garašanin: Balkan Bismarck* (Boulder, 1985), p113) Both Marx and Engels refer to him at this time as the head of the progressive anti-Russian party in Serbia. See *MECW*, Volume 12, pp11, 228, 269.
24. Of Serbia, Engels observed, 'the more Serbia and Servian nationality has consolidated itself, the more has the direct influence of Russia on Turkish Slavonians been thrown into the background... for Servia, in order to maintain its distinct position as a Christian State, has been obliged to borrow from the West of Europe its political institutions, its schools, its scientific knowledge, its industrial appliances' (*MECW*, Volume 12, p35). Servia is the old spelling of Serbia.

England 'favour the construction of an independent Slavonian Government' in place of Turkey in Europe. Similarly, Marx argued that the Western powers should 'undertake the reconstruction of the Ottoman Empire by the establishment of a Greek Empire, or of a Federal Republic of Slavonic States' as the best way of keeping Tsarist Russia at bay.²⁵ In short, these articles advocate the establishment of a Balkan federation on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire as a pro-Western bulwark against Russia.

However, the reassertion of Russian power in Serbia following the dismissal of Garašanin at the Tsar's insistence, and the relative consolidation of Turkish power after the Crimean war, led Marx and Engels to oppose self-determination for the Balkan nations under Ottoman rule, a position from which they subsequently never wavered.²⁶ Nevertheless, it is worth reflecting on how this episode bears witness to their capacity for flexible thinking, a quality not always replicated by those who later claimed to be their most faithful followers.

Dragan Plavić

Rosa Luxemburg

Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey²⁷

I: The Turkish Situation

IN the party press, we all too often encounter the attempt to represent the events in Turkey as a pure product of the play of diplomatic intrigue, especially on the Russian side.²⁸ For a time, you could even come across voices in the press which argued that the Turkish outrages were mainly an invention, that the Bashi-Bazouks²⁹ were true Christian paragons, and that the revolts of the Armenians were the work of agents paid with Russian roubles.

What is above all striking about this position is that it is in no way funda-

25. Karl Marx, 'The War Question', op cit, p212.

26. A position substantiated by Garašanin's subsequent political career. He returned to office as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in 1861, but was no longer anti-Russian. When he was dismissed again in 1867, the loudest protests came from Russia.

27. From *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the German Social Democratic paper in Dresden, 8, 9 and 10 October 1896. Translated from the German by Ian Birchall.

28. In the 1890s, especially in Armenia, Crete and Macedonia, revolts constantly flared up against foreign rule by Turkey; these were brutally crushed.

29. Well-armed irregular troops in old Turkey, notorious for their cruelty and looting. They first appeared in the Russo-Turkish War of 1853.

mentally different from the bourgeois standpoint. In both cases, we have the reduction of great social phenomena to various 'agents', that is, to the deliberate actions of the diplomatic offices. On the part of bourgeois politicians, such points of view are, of course, not surprising: these people actually *make* history in this sphere, and hence the thinnest thread of a diplomatic intrigue has great practical importance for the position they take with regard to short-term interests. But for Social Democracy, which at the present time merely *elucidates* events in the international sphere, and which is above all concerned to trace back the phenomena of public life to deeper-lying material causes, the same policy appears to be completely futile. On the contrary, in foreign policy as in domestic politics, Social Democracy can adopt its own position, which in both spheres must be determined by the same standpoints, namely by the internal social conditions of the phenomenon in question, and by our general principles.

So how do these conditions stand with regard to the national struggles in Turkey which concern us here? Until recently in part of the press, Turkey was still being portrayed as a paradise where the 'different nationalities have co-existed peacefully for hundreds of years', 'possessed the most complete autonomy', and where only the interference of European diplomacy had artificially created dissatisfaction, by persuading the happy peoples of Turkey that they are oppressed, and at the same time obstructing the innocent lamb of a Sultan from carrying out his 'repeatedly granted reforms'.³⁰

These assertions are based on extensive ignorance of the conditions.

Until the beginning of the present century, Turkey was a country with a barter economy, in which every nationality, every province and every community lived its own separate existence, patiently bore the suffering to which it was accustomed, and formed the true basis for an oriental despotism. These conditions, however oppressive they might be, were nonetheless distinguished by great stability, and could therefore survive for a long time without provoking rebellion on the part of the subjugated peoples. Since the beginning of the present century, all this has changed considerably. Shaken by conflict with the strong, centralised states of Europe, but especially threatened by Russia, Turkey found itself compelled to introduce domestic reforms, and this necessity found its first representative in the person of Mahmud II.³¹ The reforms abolished the feudal government, and in its place introduced a centralised bureaucracy, a standing army and a new financial system. The modern reforms, as always, involved enormous costs, and translated into the language of the material interests of the population, they amounted to a colossal increase in public taxation. High indirect duties, collected on every head of cattle and every piece of straw, cus-

30. At present, on the other hand, it is being said that the *Sultan* is to blame for everything. Thus the '*victim*' becomes the *scapegoat*. From the following arguments, readers will be convinced that this has nothing to do with the *perman*, but with the *conditions*. [Editorial note in *Sächsischer Arbeiter-Zeitung*]

31. Mahmud II (1784-1839) Ottoman Sultan (1808-1839) who attempted to modernise the empire in order to meet the challenge of the West.

tions duties, stamp duties and taxes on spirits, a government tithe with a periodical additional charge every quarter, and then a direct income tax, which came to 30 per cent in the towns and 40 per cent in the countryside, and with it a tax in lieu of military service for Christians, and finally more compulsory services — henceforth this was how the people had to pay for the expenses of the reformed state. But it is only the peculiar system of government that exists in Turkey that gives a true idea of the burdens that are borne. In a strange mixture of modern and medieval principles, it consists of an immense number of administrative authorities, courts and assemblies, which are bound to the capital city in an extremely centralised manner in their conduct; but at the same time all public positions are *de facto* venal, and are not paid by the central government, but are mostly financed by revenue from the local population — a kind of bureaucratic benefice. Thus the pasha can fleece the province to his heart's content, so long as he sends as large as possible a sum of money to Istanbul; thus the *cadi* (judge) is by virtue of his office financed by exactions, since he must himself pay an annual tribute to Constantinople for his office. The most important, however, is the system of taxation, which, lying in the hands of a *müllerim*, a tax farmer, in comparison to whom the intendant-general of the French *ancien régime* looks like the Good Samaritan, ends up with a total lack of system and rules, and unlimited arbitrariness. And finally, in the hands of the bureaucracy, the compulsory services were turned into a means of unbridled extortion and exploitation of the people.

Obviously a system of government constituted in this way is fundamentally different from the European model. While with us the central government fleeces the people and thereby maintains its officialdom, over there on the other hand the officialdom fleeces the people off its own bat, and thereby finances the central government. Consequently, in Turkey, officialdom appears as a special, numerous class of the population, which in its own person directly represents an economic factor, and whose existence is financed by the professional pillage of the people.

At the same time, and in connection with the reforms, there resulted a shift in the conditions of land ownership of the Christian peasants, again strongly to their disadvantage in relation to the Turkish landowner. The latter, generally a former feudal lord, was able to make his office hereditary, quite on the Christian model. When *Spahilik* (feudal tenure) was abolished by the reform, and the tithes hitherto paid by them to the Spahis were redirected to the public exchequer, he sought to assert himself in the character of the owner of landed property; as a result a new tax for the peasants — ground rent — grew up alongside the old tithes, a tax which regularly amounted to a third of the net proceeds after deduction of the tithe. For the Christian peasant, there often remained no salvation amid all these wondrous things other than to transfer a small piece of land *per oblationem* (as a conditional gift) to the Muslim Church, and then to receive it back as a leasehold on which rent was due, but which was at least free of tithes. So by the end of the 1870s, mortmain property in Turkey amounted to more than half of all cultivable landed property.

Thus the reforms were accompanied by a terrible deterioration in the material conditions of the people. But what made them particularly unbearable was a quite modern feature which had become involved in the situation — namely, *insecurity*: the irregular tax system, the fluctuating relations of land ownership, but above all the *money economy* as a result of the transformation of tax in kind into tax in money and the development of foreign trade.

The old conditions had deteriorated, and their stability was gone forever.

II: The Disintegration

The moment in the history of Turkey dealt with in our previous article is, in a certain respect, reminiscent of Russia. But while there the reforms after the Crimean War³² created at one and the same time the rapid development of capitalism and a material foundation for administrative and financial innovations and for the further development of militanism, in Turkey an economic transformation corresponding to the modern reforms was completely lacking. All attempts to create a native industry in Turkey miscarried. The few factories founded by the government produced goods that were of poor quality and expensive. The absence of the most elementary preconditions of bourgeois order — security of persons and property, at least formal equality before the law, a civil law separate from religious law, modern means of communication, etc — make the appearance of capitalist forms of production an absolute impossibility. The trading policy of the European states towards Turkey operates in the same direction, exploiting its political impotence to ensure an unprotected market for its own industries. Until now, alongside trade, usury has been the only manifestation of domestic capital. Economically, therefore, Turkey remained with the most primitive peasant agriculture, in which in many cases the property relations had not even got rid of their semi-feudal character.

It is clear that a material base for the money economy constituted like this had not grown in parallel with the forms of government and financial taxes associated with it, that it was flattened by it, and, as it could not develop, it was moving into a process of disintegration.

The disintegration of Turkey became glaringly obvious in two extremes at the same time. On the one hand, a permanent deficit arose in the peasant economy. This acquired a tangible expression in the *usurer*, who had become an organic element of the village community, and indicated the internal festering of conditions like an abscess. Three per cent monthly interest rates were a permanent phenomenon in the Turkish villages, and the regular epilogue to the silent drama of the village was the proletarianisation of the peasant, without forms of

32. The defeat of Russia in the Crimean War (1853-56) had so exacerbated the domestic political situation that the ruling class between 1861 and 1870 had to introduce a series of political reforms, which certainly were incomplete and contaminated with feudal hangovers, but which nonetheless encouraged capitalist development in Russia. The most important reforms concerned the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the formation of rural and urban organs of self-government in 1864, changes in the administration of popular education in 1863 and changes in justice in 1864, as well as in the censorship in 1865.

production being available in the country which would have enabled him to be absorbed into a modern working class, with the result that he all too often sank down into the lumpen-proletariat. These phenomena are further linked to the decline of agriculture, devastating famines and foot-and-mouth disease.

On the other hand, there was the deficit in the state treasury. Since 1854, Turkey had taken the road of endless foreign loans. The usurers of London and Paris operated in the capital just as the Armenian and Greek usurers operated in the villages. Ruling became ever more difficult, and those ruled became ever more dissatisfied. Bankruptcy in the capital and bankruptcy in the villages; palace revolutions in Constantinople and popular risings in the provinces — these were the ultimate results of internal decline.

It was impossible to find a way out of this situation. The remedy could only have been achieved through a total transformation of economic and social life, through a transition to capitalist forms of production. But there did not exist and do not exist either the basis for such a transformation or a social class which could come forward as its representative. The 'repeatedly granted reforms' of the Sultan could obviously not obviate the difficulties, since they were necessarily no more than further juridical innovations, which left social and economic life undisturbed, and often simply remained on paper, since they were opposed to the dominating interests of officialdom.

Turkey cannot regenerate itself *as a whole*. From the outset, it consisted of several different lands. The stability of the way of life, the self-contained nature of provinces and nationalities had disappeared. But no material interest, no common development had been created which could give them internal unity. On the contrary, the pressure and misery of jointly belonging to the Turkish state became ever greater. And so there was a natural tendency for the various nationalities to escape from the whole, and instinctively to seek the way to higher social development in autonomous existence. And thus the historic sentence was pronounced on Turkey: it was facing ruin.

Even if all the subjects of the Ottoman government came to experience the misery of a decaying state organism, and the various Muslim peoples — Druzes, Nazarenes, Kurds and Arabs — also rebelled against the Turkish yoke, the separatist tendency above all spread to the Christian lands. Here the conflict of material interests often coincided with national frontiers. The Christian is denied his right, his oath is valueless against a Muslim, he cannot bear arms, and as a rule he cannot hold any public office. But what is even more important, as a peasant he often occupies the land of a Muslim landowner, and is sucked dry by Muslim officials. At grassroots level, therefore, there is frequently a *class struggle* — a struggle of the small peasants and tenants with the class of landowners and officials, as for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the conditions are strongly reminiscent of Ireland. Thus the opposition produced by economic and legal pressure found here a ready-made ideology in the national and religious conflicts. The admixture of religious elements was bound to give them a particularly crude and savage character. And thus all the elements were present to create a struggle to the death of the Christian nations with Turkey, the struggle

of Greeks, Bosnian-Herzegovinians, Serbs and Bulgarians. And now the sequence has reached the Armenians.

In the face of the social conditions which we have briefly sketched out here, the claims that the risings and national struggles in Turkey have been artificially produced by agents of the Russian government seem no more serious than the claims of the bourgeoisie that the whole modern labour movement is the work of a few social democratic agitators. Admittedly the dissolution of Turkey is not advancing purely by its own momentum. Admittedly the tender hands of Russian Cossacks rendered midwife's services at the birth of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria, and the Russian rouble is the permanent stage-manager of the historic drama of the Black Sea. But here diplomacy is doing no more than throwing a burning stick into inflammable material, of which mountains have accumulated during centuries of injustice and exploitation.

What we have to deal with here is an historical process developing with the inevitability of a law of nature. The impossibility of the continuation of archaic economic forms in Turkey in the face of the fiscal system and the money economy, and the impossibility of the money economy developing into capitalism, that is the key to understanding events on the Balkan Peninsula. The basis of the existence of Turkish despotism is being undermined. But the basis for its development into a modern state is not being created. So it must perish, not as a form of government, but as a state, not through the class struggle, but through the struggle of nationalities. And what is being created here is not a regenerated Turkey, but a series of new states, carved out of the carcass of Turkey.

This is the situation. Now we have to discuss what position *Social Democracy* has to take in relation to the Turkish events.

III: The Point of View of Social Democracy

Now what can be the position of Social Democracy towards the events in Turkey? In principle, Social Democracy always stands on the side of aspirations for freedom. The Christian nations, in this case the Armenians, want to liberate themselves from the yoke of Turkish rule, and Social Democracy must declare itself unreservedly in support of their cause.

Of course in foreign politics, just as in domestic questions, we should not see things too schematically. The national struggle is not always the appropriate form for the struggle for freedom. For example, the national question takes a different form in Poland, Alsace-Lorraine or Bohemia. In all these cases, we are faced with a directly opposing process of capitalist assimilation of the annexed lands to the dominant ones, which condemns the separatist efforts to impotence, and it is in the interests of the working-class movement to advocate the unity of forces, and not their fragmentation in national struggles. But in the question of the revolts in Turkey, the situation is different: the Christian lands are bound to Turkey only by force, they have no working-class movement, they are declining by virtue of a natural social development, or rather dissolution, and hence the aspirations to freedom can here make themselves felt only in a na-

tional struggle; therefore our partisanship cannot and must not admit of any doubt. It is not our job to draw up practical demands for the Armenians, or to determine the political form which should be aspired to here; for this, Armenia's own aspirations would have to be taken into consideration, as well as its internal conditions and the international context. For us, the question in this situation is above all the general standpoint, and this requires us to stand *for* the insurgents and not *against* them.

But what is the situation with the *practical interests* of Social Democracy? Do we not fall into a contradiction with these by taking the aforementioned principled stance? We think we can prove the exact opposite in three points.

Firstly, the liberation of the Christian lands from Turkey means progress in international political life. The existence of an artificial position like that of today's Turkey, where so many interests of the capitalist world converge, has a constricting and retarding effect on general political development. The Eastern Question, together with that of Alsace-Lorraine, forces the European powers to prefer to pursue a policy of stratagems and deception, to conceal their real interests under deceptive names, and to seek to achieve them by subterfuge. With the liberation of the Christian nations from Turkey, bourgeois politics will be stripped of one of its last idealistic tatters — 'protection of the Christians' — and will be reduced to its true content, naked interest in plunder. This is just as beneficial to our cause as the reduction of all sorts of 'liberal' and 'enlightened' programmes of the bourgeois parties to being purely and simply questions of money.

Secondly, it follows from the earlier articles that the separation of the Christian lands from Turkey is a progressive phenomenon, an act of social development, for this separation is the only way in which the Turkish lands can achieve higher forms of social life. As long as a land remains under Turkish rule, there can be no question of modern capitalist development. Separated from Turkey, it acquires a European form of state and bourgeois institutions, and is gradually drawn into the general stream of capitalist development. Thus Greece and Romania have made striking progress since their separation from Turkey. It is true that all the newly-emerging states are minor states, but nevertheless it would be wrong to perceive their establishment as a process of political fragmentation. For Turkey itself is not a great power in the modern sense of the term. But in countries with bourgeois development the ground is gradually also being prepared for the modern working-class movement, for Social Democracy, as for example is already the case in Romania, and to some extent also in Bulgaria.³³ Thereby our highest international interest is satisfied, namely

33. The Armenian socialists are therefore in our opinion on the wrong track when they — as in *Die Neue Zeit*, Volume 14, no 42 — think they have to justify their separatist aspirations with an ostensible capitalist development in Armenia. On the contrary, separation from Turkey is here only the *precondition* for the germination of capitalism. And of course capitalism itself is a precondition of the socialist movement. In our opinion, therefore, the Armenian comrades must — to paraphrase Lassalle — for the time being concern themselves with a precondition for the precondition of socialism — a kind of precondition squared [Luxemburg's note]

that as far as possible the socialist movement should get a foothold in all countries.

Thirdly and lastly, the process of the dissolution of Turkey is closely linked to the question of Russian rule in Europe, and this is the heart of the matter. When even our press from time to time took the side of Turkey, this clearly did not happen out of innate cruelty, or some special preference for the partisans of polygamy. Obviously, the basis was an essential opposition to the appetites of Russian absolutism, which seeks the road to world dominion over the corpse of Turkey, and wants to use its Christian nations as a means for its advance on Constantinople. But in our opinion, the good will was applied in quite the wrong way, and the measures against Russia were sought in quite the opposite direction from where they really lie.

Previous experience has already shown that in its policy towards the Balkan Peninsula, Russia usually achieved the exact opposite to what it was striving for. The peoples freed from Turkish rule have regularly repaid Russia's benevolence with 'base ingratitude', that is, they have bluntly rejected an exchange of the Russian yoke for the Turkish. However unexpected this was for the Russian diplomats, this conduct of the Balkan states was very far from surprising. Between them and Russia, there is a natural conflict of interests, the same conflict as exists between the lamb and the wolf, the hunter and his prey. Dependence on Turkey is the veil which conceals this conflict of interest, and even allows it to appear superficially and temporarily as a community of interest. The masses do not engage in complex and remote reflections. Since the national risings in Turkey are certainly mass movements, they accept the first and best method that corresponds to their immediate interests, even if this method is the vile diplomacy of Russia. But as soon as the chains between the Christian lands and Turkey have been broken, Russian diplomacy also shows its true face, as pure villainess, and the liberated land immediately turns instinctively against Russia. If the nations subjugated by Turkey are Russia's allies, the nations liberated from Turkey become so many natural enemies of Russia. Bulgaria's present policy towards Russia is to a great extent a result of its *semi*-freedom, a result of the chain which still links it to Turkey.

But even more important is another result produced in this process. The liberation of the Christian lands from Turkey is basically taken as being likewise a 'liberation' of Turkey from its Christian subjects. It is precisely these which serve as a motive for European diplomacy to operate in Turkey, and who consign it unconditionally to the Russian side. Moreover, it is they who in the event of war make Turkey unable to resist. The Christians do not serve in the Turkish armed forces, but are always ready to rise up against them. Therefore a foreign war for Turkey always means a second war at home, and therefore a dispersal of its military forces and a paralysis of its movements. Freed from this Christian torment, Turkey would undoubtedly adopt a freer position in international politics, and its state territory would be more commensurable with its defensive forces; but above all it would be rid of the enemy within, the natural ally of every external aggressor. In short, renunciation of rule over the Christians makes the Ot-

toman government more capable of resistance, above all in relation to Russia. This explains why Russia today is *in favour* of the integrity of Turkey. It is now in its interest for Turkey to remain in possession of the bacillus which will cause its disorganisation — the Christian nations — and for these therefore to remain under the yoke of Turkey and dependent on Russia, until a favourable moment arrives for it to carry out its plans with regard to Constantinople. This also explains why *we* must be in favour of the liberation of the Christians from Turkey, and not of the integrity of that country.

In our opinion, we should seek the remedy against the advance of Russian reaction in the aforementioned results of the process of Turkish disintegration, and not in observations about 'whether Salisbury³⁴ is the man for the job', or whether he is the man to show the door to the Russians 'back in Turkey'. And this aspect of the question is exceptionally important. Russian reaction is much too dangerous and much too serious an enemy for us to allow ourselves the luxury of warding off its leaden weight with paper darts, while at the same time ignoring a serious weapon which circumstances offer us to combat it with. *Today advocating the integrity of Turkey actually means playing into the hands of Russian diplomacy.*

To imagine distant political conjectures in detail is a fantasy. But it is far from impossible that the resistance of liberated Turkey and the liberated Balkan lands could frustrate the Russian advance for so long that Russian absolutism would not live to see the final solution of the Constantinople question and would have to die, to the benefit of the peoples, without being able to participate in the settlement of this question of universal concern.

Thus our practical interests completely coincide with the principled standpoint, and hence we recommend that the following propositions be adopted for the present stance of Social Democracy on the Eastern Question.

1. We must accept the process of the disintegration of Turkey as a permanent fact, and not get it into our heads that it could or should be stopped.
2. We should give our fullest sympathy to the aspirations of the Christian nations for autonomy.
3. We should welcome these aspirations above all as a means of fighting *against* Tsarist Russia, and emphatically advocate their independence from Russia, as well as from Turkey.

It is no accident that in the questions dealt with here, practical considerations have led to the same conclusions as our general principles. For the aims and principles of Social Democracy derive from real social development, and are based on it; therefore in historical processes it must to a great extent appear that events are finally bringing grist to the social democratic mill, and that we can look after our immediate interests in the best way by maintaining a position of principle. A deeper look at events, therefore, always makes it superfluous for us to make some diplomats into the causes of great popular movements and to

34 Robert Cecil, Third Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903), was three times British Prime Minister and four times Foreign Secretary between 1878 and 1902.

seek the means of combating these diplomats in other diplomats. That is just coffee-house politics.

Wilhelm Liebknecht Statement³⁵

IN one of the recent Party meetings, among other criticisms which are not relevant here, I was accused of not representing the socialist point of view on the Armenian question, and of having rejected a longish article which put this point of view. I did indeed reject this questionable article, which was submitted by Miss Rosa Luxemburg, and precisely because the authoress did not inform her judgement on matters in Armenia on the basis of her own observation and knowledge, but merely arranged the well-known assertions of the Russian and Gladstonian press in a socialist pattern. That could have been done by any comrade here in Germany who takes pleasure in making such patterns. That the Armenian insurrection was connected with economic conditions, that should be clear to the youngest elementary pupil of socialism — but even the predatory wars of the most backward African tribes can be reduced to economic causes. If Miss Luxemburg had brought forward new facts and really shed light on the Armenian-Turkish events, then I would have gladly published the article, despite its deviant position. I should never dream of wanting to put forward my interpretation of the Eastern Question as the only correct one. However, when I was in England during the Crimean War, I concerned myself exhaustively with the Eastern Question, and in association with Karl Marx and in the school of the brilliant David Urquhart,³⁶ the best expert on Turkish conditions and Russian diplomacy, I came to the interpretation of the Eastern Question which I have put forward ever since, and the correctness of which is confirmed by the development of events day by day.

As I have already intimated in *Vorwärts*, there is a prospect that the classical articles and pamphlets, which Marx wrote in English in the 1850s about Lord Palmerston and the Eastern Question will be collected and made accessible to German readers in translation.³⁷

Of course I sympathise with all oppressed people, classes and nations. But

35. From *Vorwärts*, 11 November 1896. Translated from the German by Ian Birchall.

36. On Urquhart, see note 8 above.

37. Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) was the British Prime Minister whom Marx attacked for his allegedly pro-Russian policies. Besides *The Eastern Question* collection of 1897 discussed in note 22 above, it is perhaps no accident that Eleanor Marx also edited two other works by Karl Marx dealing with the Russian question, *The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston* and *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*, which appeared in 1899 after her death.

the Turks, against whom a war of extermination is being waged by the Russian side, have the same 'human rights' to existence and life as the Armenians and other peoples. And for anyone who allows reason as well as emotion to command his politics, and who took into consideration all the factors involved, the fact is established that any rising in Turkey in the present state of affairs — for a socialist movement in Armenia at present is only castles in the air — can only benefit the Russian Tsarist policy of conquest. Miss Rosa Luxemburg, who is a Polish woman, would perhaps find a more fertile field if she concerned herself with the *Russian atrocities in Poland and in Russia itself*. Then she would not run the danger of doing an involuntary service to the 'protector of European absolutism'.

Karl Kautsky

The Eastern Question and Social Democracy³⁸

THE uprising in Crete has pushed the Eastern Question into the forefront of European interests. Social Democracy too cannot avoid taking a standpoint on this question. All the more so, since at this moment in time the situation is so grave that any wrong move could produce quite disastrous consequences. It is true that Social Democracy is not nearly so far advanced as to be able to prescribe policy to a foreign Minister, and it is certainly not responsible for the actions of diplomats. However, it is still a force that cannot be ignored, and, for the weight that any government has to throw in the scales of international affairs, it is not an insignificant matter whether that government is in agreement with its nation or stands in opposition to her.

Over and above this, the Eastern Question has always been a particularly important one for Social Democracy, and has engaged our masters intensely, and quite rightly so. For, in the battles around Turkey, it was never just a matter of the interests of competing dynasties and capitalist layers, but also a matter pertinent to the interests of European democracy.

The most important point within Turkey is Constantinople, not only because

38. From *Vorwärts*, 4 March 1897. Translated from the German by Esther Leslie. The following is a note by the *Vorwärts* editors: 'In our discussions of the Cretan Question we have made clear on a number of occasions that there exist within our party a variety of standpoints on the Eastern Question. In order to give a platform to representatives of conceptions different to those that have already found expression in our journal, we have invited Comrade Kautsky to present his understanding of the Eastern Question. Another article on the same theme, which deviates from the position taken by Kautsky, will be published in a forthcoming edition.'

of its commercial significance, but even more so because of its strategic importance. For whoever is master of Constantinople, should he also dispose of the necessary firepower, is also the master of the Eastern Mediterranean basin, and therewith the master of the sea route into East India and East Asia.

However, the greediest glances have been directed at Turkey, not by one of the capitalist nations of Western Europe, but by Russia.

For Russia, the possession of Constantinople meant much more than for other nations. Whoever gained Constantinople did not only command the route from Europe to Asia. A new route into Europe was also opened up, a route that is not only serviceable for peaceful uses. Constantinople is 'the decisive step towards [Russian] supremacy over Europe'.³⁹

Russia's victory over Constantinople posed a danger for the whole of Europe, and the key major European powers managed, in the main, to work together when what was at stake was safeguarding of Constantinople, the Tsar's town (Tsarigrad)⁴⁰ from the Tsars.

Here is the point at which the interests of European powers in the Eastern Question coincide with those of European democracy. Democracy has no interest in supporting Turkey let alone supporting the monocracy of the Sultan in itself, but it is very interested in preventing the power of the Tsars in Europe and over Europe. Indeed, this should further be forced back, for Russia is the stronghold of absolutism, the greatest and most dangerous opponent of European revolution.

Marx and Engels saw this clearly, and therefore, alongside the fight against capitalism, was a second great task that they set themselves, the fight against Tsarism.

This task turned them into the most active friends of any revolutionary movement in Russia — including the Polish one, as well as, later, the so-called nihilists.⁴¹ It made them into the most active friends of any non-Russian nation that was fighting against Russia. It made them into the most decisive friends of Turkey, each time it was threatened by Russia.

Turkey has rarely had better friends than our two predecessors in struggle. Unlike so many members of the democratic parties, they neither let themselves be lured by the liberal phrases with which Russia prettified its actions against Turkey, nor were they confused by the intrigues and conflicts of interest which operated amongst the major powers and which led them so often into disputes with each other, at moments when a common front against a common enemy was most urgently needed.

It was not a preference for the Turkish regime that guided Marx and Engels, but rather a recognition of the dangers of Tsarism. This did not blind them to the deplorable state of affairs that gnawed at the marrow of the Turkish Empire.

39. Fredenck Engels, 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom' (1890), *MECW*, Volume 27, p18.

40. A play on words. Constantinople was the imperial capital of the Byzantine Empire. In Slavonic languages, it is known as the Tsar's (Emperor's) town.

41. Kautsky is here using 'nihilists' in the wider sense of those Russian revolutionaries, such as Chernyshevsky, associated with populist socialism.

In the Turkish peasants, above all, they found 'indubitably one of the ablest and most moral representatives of the peasantry in Europe', as Marx put it in a letter which was printed in Comrade Liebknecht's well-known brochure of 1878, *Shall Europe Become Cossack?*⁴²

But the peasants do not rule Turkey; and in the towns, that is to say, in Constantinople, the Turk is completely corrupted. Two hearty supporters, indeed venerated of the Turkish people, who witnessed Turkish conditions with their own eyes, wrote:

In all lands, towns are the birthplace of vice, but in Turkey, the distinction between town and country in this respect is more strongly marked than elsewhere, and for this fact a reason may perhaps be found in the almost universally Greek origin of the towns, and the consequent inheritance of those traditions of immorality bequeathed by the Lower Empire.⁴³

The peak of corruption of urban Osman⁴⁴ rule is represented by the Seraglio⁴⁵ regime, the absolute lordship of the Sultans, odalisques,⁴⁶ his eunuchs and other favourites, whose indolence and ignorance is outdone only by their greed and spiteful cruelty.

This Seraglio regime stood and stands in the way of any reform and any improvement of the Turkish Empire. It made sure that every attempt to stem complete collapse failed, as did every attempt to introduce conditions which would make it possible to lead the development of town and society towards those modern relationships without which Turkey is lost. It is here that the pressure must be exerted by whoever wants to secure Turkey permanently from Russian invasion. All wars against Russia will be in vain so long as the Seraglio regime is left intact.

It was this sentiment that Marx also expressed in his letter of 4 February 1878, mentioned above. The main reason for the defeat of Turkey in the war of 1877-78 is given to be the fact that no one managed to instigate a revolution in Constantinople. And so the incarnation of the old Seraglio regime — Mahmud Damad⁴⁷ — the Sultan's son in law, remained the actual pilot of the war, which had absolutely the same result as the Russian cabinet fighting a war against itself. The systematic paralysing and compromise of the Turkish army by these fellows can be proven right down to the smallest detail. In addition, this is common

42. See note 8 above.

43. SGB St Clair and Ch A Brophy, *A Residence in Bulgaria or Notes on the Resources and the Administration of Turkey*, London, 1869, p230 (Kautsky's note). The Lower Empire is a reference to the Later Roman Empire, or Byzantium.

44. Osman I (1258-1324) is regarded as the founder of the Ottoman state. 'Ottoman' is derived from his name in Arabic, 'Uthman.

45. Seraglio or harem is here another term for the Sultan's palace.

46. Female slaves in a harem.

47. Mahmud Damad (1840-1884), an anti-constitutionalist, was the Ottoman War Minister. He was later implicated in the murder of his father-in-law, Sultan Abdul Aziz, and was banished for life.

knowledge in Constantinople, which only increases the historical guilt of the Turks.

And yet the Turks did indeed attempt to have a revolution. The government of the Sultan Abdul Aziz,⁴⁸ who, in spite of the most insane wastage, had built up an unimaginable private fortune, while the mass of state servants starved, and the most important state functions remained unfulfilled — this miserable government, which presented 'even in a world that had declined into laziness a disgusting spectacle'⁴⁹ — led Turkey in 1875 to financial bankruptcy and to the edge of political bankruptcy. In this desperate situation, a number of Turkish patriots decided to take the only step which could have saved an Empire on the point of total dissolution: a *coup d'état*. Led by Midhat Pasha,⁵⁰ the conspirators overpowered the government, removed Abdul Aziz on 1 June 1876, and put Murad V⁵¹ in his place. When, after only a few days, he went insane as a result of alcoholic poisoning, he too was dethroned and his brother Abdul Hamid II⁵² was made Sultan on 31 August.

But more important than this change in the occupancy of the throne was the new parliamentary constitution, which was extremely liberal and, in essence, the work of Midhat Pasha, who became Grand Vizier on 22 December 1876. He promulgated this new constitution on 28 December.

The clique around the Seraglio was furious, as also was the Russian government. A reformed, that is to say, a viable Turkey was the last thing it wanted to see instituted. The new Turkish constitution threatened not only to consolidate Turkey and to reconcile the Turks who were in revolt against her, it was also dangerous for Russia's development at home, given the emergent revolutionary movement there. When Gorkh⁵³ came up with the idea of demanding that Russia have a constitution just like Turkey's, it was suppressed for two months. The new constitution had to be destroyed before it had had time to settle in.

In a state treatise that he himself wrote (*La Turquie, son passé, son avenir*, 1878), Midhat Pasha said the following about the situation:

Those who have watched the thrust of events attentively must have noticed that Russia fears nothing more than a real mastering of the situation in Turkey. Therefore it was always against those who, at various points, undertook new reforms in the administration of the country, and it is not

48. Abdul Aziz (1830-1876), Sultan of Turkey (1861-1876) was deposed and assassinated in 1876.

49. Bamberg, *Geschichte der orientalischen Angelegenheit im Zeitraum des Pariser und des Berliner Friedens*, Berlin, 1892, p.447. Bamberg is certainly no enemy of the Turks and amongst other things he uncovered the network of Russian intriguers who led the war in 1877. (Kautsky's note)

50. Midhat Pasha (1822-1883) was a leading Ottoman statesman who helped depose Sultan Abdul Aziz and then pushed through the proclamation of the first Turkish Constitution of 1876. Overthrown and banished in 1877, he was probably later murdered.

51. Murad V (1840-1904) was the nephew of the deposed Sultan Abdul Aziz. He ruled from May to August 1876.

52. Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918) was Sultan from 1876 until 1909, when a failed counter-revolution against the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 led to his downfall.

53. A liberal Russian newspaper.

too bold a contention that the Porte,⁵⁴ by announcing the constitution, to a certain extent, accelerated the outbreak of war.

But Russia was not the only enemy of Turkey. Even before it had declared war on 24 April 1877, Midhat Pasha was toppled by the same means that had elevated him — a palace intrigue on 5 February, at whose head stood Mahmud Damad, mentioned above, the Sultan's brother-in-law and the most resolute representative of dirty Seraglio domination.

The Turkish parliament did meet again, on 19 May, but it was dissolved after two sessions, owing to the fact that some of the delegates voiced criticisms that were just that bit too severe. No new parliament was convened.

The whole episode made one thing quite clear: there was no class in Turkey that possessed the power to carry out a real revolution, to impose it on the warring elements, and to defend Turkey against the opponents of its rebirth.

The revolution demanded by Marx could, at best, force itself through only if European powers came to its defence. That was also Midhat's point of view. In the treatise mentioned above, he acknowledges that the new constitution rests on a very shaky foundation, but Europe could very easily aid it, if it took it upon itself the task of defending the constitution.

But it was not as simple as that. Who indeed was the 'Europe' that was to defend Turkey against the Tsars and the Sultans? In their own ways, the capitalists of England, France, Italy, Austria and so on demanded no less exploitation and domination of Turkey than Russia. Turkish industry, far from finding a protector, was, in actual fact, fully crippled by the competition between foreigners. Not only could it not build up a capitalist industry of any consequence, even the industry that it inherited from the Middle Ages, which still blossomed here and there, was repressed and virtually destroyed.

European capital made itself noticeably busy in Turkey in another way. Hand in hand with economic regression, general devastation and dissolution went the increasing indebtedness of the Empire, whose burden oppressed the peasantry more and more, for it was this class which had to come up with the interest payments on the usury that the state was paying out, and so itself fell into the hands of usurers.

If one adds to this the fact that it was precisely the best friends of Turkey who were competing with her to grab for themselves one bit after another — after the victory of 1877-78, England took first Cyprus and later Egypt as reward for good service; Austria marched into Bosnia and Herzegovina, and France annexed Tunisia — then one can well understand that the revolution that is necessary to save Turkey is just as incapable of appearing from the side of 'Europe' as from the side of the Turkish people themselves.

The fate of Turkey is sealed: squeezed between Russian Tsarism and European capitalism, it will be most certainly crushed by both. One might find such a

54. The Sublime Porte, literally the 'sublime gate' of the Sultan's palace, was shorthand for the Ottoman government.

fate tragic, one might regret it, but one really does have to count on it. It is not necessary to deny the abstract possibility of reforming Turkey. The real possibility does not exist.

Russia had never dared to march openly on Constantinople. That would have immediately united all the powers in Europe against it. Instead, it masked its penetration through the creation of new states on Turkish territory, which were supposed to be Turkish vassals but were actually Russian. And it exerted its influence beyond these states, by taking the religious and national idea under its wing, and so appeared as the defender of all orthodox Christians and Slavs. Like Napoleon III⁵⁵ and Bismarck, the Tsar used the real existing need of unfree people for self-emancipation and national unity as a means of promoting its own plans, and, thereby, it hitched the revolution to the carriage of absolutism. Since the Russo-Turkish war, this had become a dangerous policy, for it was precisely this that gave the largest impulse to the development, not only of capitalism, but also of revolutionary classes and movements in Russia itself. And the rulers of this Empire are as equally sufficiently wary of this as the Germans and French, without feeling the need to promote an overthrow or even to practice it themselves.

The rôle of the Tsar as liberator of oppressed peoples, however, is not only dangerous for Russian absolutism, it has also become ineffective outside Russia. Frederick Engels, of whom one can scarcely maintain that he underestimated the Russian danger, observed this back in 1890. In the article that has already been mentioned several times, he says:

Altogether it is since 1878 that we begin to really see how much the position of Russian diplomacy has changed for the worse, since the people are more and more permitting themselves to put in a word, and that with success. Even in the Balkan Peninsula, where Russia appears *ex professo*⁵⁶ as the champion of nationalities, nothing seems to succeed now. The Romanians, as a reward for having made victory possible for the Russians at Plevna, have been compelled to give up their portion of Bessarabia,⁵⁷ and will hardly allow themselves to be taken in by drafts on the future with respect to Transylvania and the Banat.⁵⁸ The Bulgarians are heartily sick of the Tsar's method of liberation, thanks to the Tsar's agents sent into their country. Only the Servians, and possibly the Greeks — both outside of the direct line of fire on Constantinople — are not yet

55. Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, Napoleon III (1808-1873) was President of the Second Republic of France (1850-52), and then, after engineering a *coup d'état*, Emperor of the French (1852-70). Notorious for exploiting national movements (for example, the Italian) for dynastic-state aggrandisement and to ward off domestic discontent with his *Bonapartist* dictatorship, his defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) led to his downfall.

56. That is, openly.

57. Bessarabia was an area that was much contested by Russia and Romania, and very roughly approximates to the modern independent state of Moldova, north-east of Romania.

58. The Banat was then in the Hungarian part of Austria-Hungary. After the First World War, it was divided between Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia.

recalcitrant. The Austrian Slavs, whom the Tsar felt called upon to deliver from German bondage, have since, in the Cisleithanian Provinces⁵⁹ of the Empire at least, played the part of the ruling race. The phase of the emancipation of oppressed Christian nations by the almighty Tsar is played out, can, at most, be applied to Crete and Armenia only.⁶⁰

After recent experiences, Armenian and Cretans might not expect very much from the daddy on the Neva.⁶¹

Those states that are actual vassals of Russia, and who were supposed to spread its domination on the Balkan Peninsula, soon found the Russian yoke even heavier than the Turkish one, and they have striven to shake it off. Thereby they nonetheless proved that they can exert greater force and more power against Russia than Turkey can. Russia noticed this in Romania, which, relying on Austria, adopted an independent policy straight after the war. It also became aware of it quickly in Bulgaria which, as early as 1883, dared to give marching orders to the two Russian generals, Kaulbars and Sobolev,⁶² who were supposed to rule over Bulgaria along Tsarist lines.

Tsarist diplomacy and the Turkish Seraglio regime easily joined together in opposition to this, and the longer it went on the more the regime renounced not only room to breathe, but also any power to pursue independent politics. It had to rely all the more closely on Russia, the more this represented the only power that did not press for reforms, that is, above all, for limitations on the greed and arbitrariness of the Seraglio regime.

Soon Russian diplomacy had to admit that as long as Russia was not able to occupy Constantinople directly, as long as it was not able to rule directly on the Balkan Peninsula but only through its vassals, and those small states that it had itself created were no longer fit to carry out this rôle, only the Porte itself could do it. But if the Sultan was the Tsar's most devoted vassal, then every attack on its possessions harmed Russia itself, which was felt to be all the more unpleasant when one of the unfaithful vassals who had dissociated itself from the Russian regime was thereby strengthened. That is how Russia transformed itself into the protector of the integrity of Turkey; it prepared its way to Constantinople no longer in the name of revolution, but in the name of legitimacy.

The first and clearest evidence that its policy was fully transformed came when the revolution broke out in Eastern Rumelia, and led to the union of this land with Bulgaria in 1885. At the peace of San Stefano, Russia had wanted to

59. Cisleithania refers to the Austrian part of the Empire where the Germans, Czechs, Poles and Slovenes largely lived (as opposed to Transleithania, the Hungarian part, where the Hungarians, Croats, Serbs and Romanians largely lived). The names are derived from the River Leitha which divides the two regions.

60. Frederick Engels, 'The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom' (1890), *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Volume 27, p44.

61. The River Neva runs through St Petersburg, then capital of Tsarist Russia.

62. General Leonid Sobolev (1844-1913) was Bulgaria's Prime Minister and Interior Minister from 1881 to 1883, while General Baron Aleksei Kaulbars (1844-1905) was Minister of War. They ruled Bulgaria for the Tsar until the Bulgarians forced them from power.

create a Bulgaria that was far larger than the combined Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia later founded by the Congress of Berlin.⁶³ One step towards realising this aim was carried out in 1885, and yet there was no power that protested so energetically against it, in the name of the integrity of Turkey, than Russia. Turkey itself was reassured, and only Russia was not.

Since the great upturn that followed the Russo-Turkish war, this shows clearly where the real obstacles to Russia in the Balkan Peninsula are to be found.

Completely in harmony with this new position of Russia *vis-à-vis* Bulgaria is its altered attitude towards all the other efforts of individual peoples for autonomy or secession from the Empire. It has renounced its image as a liberator or even a protector of the Armenians. An autonomous Armenia could indeed be more uncomfortable for Russia than one run and ravaged by the Turkish pasha. Now it has also robbed all hopes that the Cretans and Greeks might have harboured, given earlier traditions. Just as is the case with Bulgaria, so too Greece faces no power that is as decisive a protector of the integrity of Turkey as Russia.

No wonder old Gladstone said that he no longer understood Russia. Of course, anyone who takes Russia at its word and so formerly believed it was truly fighting for the freedom of enslaved Balkan peoples, and today believes it is truly fighting for the integrity of Turkey, would find Russia's transformation truly incomprehensible. In actual fact, Russia's aims have remained the same; now, as then, its eyes are directed at Constantinople, even if in certain respects the value of Constantinople for Russia has turned into something different. But circumstances have changed, and therefore the means that it uses have altered. No longer the defender of Christians and Slavs, it lodges itself in the Ottoman Empire as the defender of the Padishah⁶⁴ himself.

But Russia is not only dominant in Turkey today. It is dominant in Europe, so much so that Europe has proven itself totally incapable of dispossessing it of its booty.

For the 'United States of Europe' are themselves deeply divided, as a result of their famous diplomacy and the lobbying of capitalist cliques who are as short sighted as they are greedy for profits, and who again and again create new divisions between nations, instead of overcoming the old ones.

Thus England went into Egypt, and, as a consequence, made France an enemy. Tunisia became a bone of contention between France and Italy. Austria's march into Bosnia and its declaration of an advance on Salonika turned it from a natural ally into a competitor of the Balkan states and is the reason why Serbia, just like Bulgaria, did not immediately free itself from Russian influence. And the putsch in the Transvaal severed ties between England and Germany.

63. The Treaty of San Stefano, which Russia imposed on Turkey after its defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, created a large Bulgarian client state which Britain and Austria-Hungary reduced by over half at the Congress of Berlin, leaving many Bulgarians outside it (such as those in Eastern Rumelia).

64. This is Persian for chief ruler, but here a reference to the Sultan.

But all these differences are overshadowed in depth and significance by the opposition between Germany and France regarding Alsace-Lorraine, and it is primarily as a result of this that Russia has achieved such prominence today. It led to a tug of war of the large Western powers under the lash, which has solely benefited Russia. Thanks to this tug-of-war, Japan simply suppressed China so that it fell as easy booty into Russia's hands, and this same tug-of-war promotes Russia's domination in Constantinople. However, it appears that Germany has finally outstripped the French Republic, and that the Turkish turmoil has made Germany a useful tool for Russian plans. As a Mediterranean state, France can hardly look on indifferently at the ruin of Turkey and the occupation of the Yildiz Palace⁶⁵ by the Russian ambassador, and it certainly cannot be compelled to romantic enthusiasm for the legitimate Sultan. It is not impossible that the Russian-French alliance might come a cropper on the beaches of Crete.

These are the essential components of the current situation. It is not easy, but it is also not our job to rack our brains thinking of how to get out of it, for we did not create the situation, and we do not possess governmental clout anyway. But we must understand the situation, and we must be careful not to become accomplices, directly or indirectly, through our speeches or through our silence.

We have never had cause to enthuse over the Sultan's regime. But as long as the sole player capable of opposition to the Tsar in the Balkan Peninsula remained Turkey, it was understandable that we would choose it as the lesser evil. Today the situation is different. Today those beautiful souls, the Sultan and the Tsar, have found each other, and we could easily commit a mistake with grave consequences, if, for reasons of tradition, we supported a regime today that is so depraved and unequalled in degeneracy, which only still exists by the grace of the sworn enemy of democracy, and is fully subjected to it.

The fight against the Tsars in Turkey is led most efficiently today by the strengthening of the Christian Balkan states. If alongside the revolution in Constantinople the fall of the Seraglio regime were to succeed, then that would have the most blessed consequences. But all the preconditions have disappeared which make the victory of such a revolution likely, or even possible.

In no case should we fear for a moment longer that if we support the rights of peoples, which the Sultan rules, or rather whips up against each other, that we, without wanting it, support the cause of Russian despotism.

Both these Eastern despots stand in the same camp today. European democracy must stand decisively in another.

65. The palace favoured by Sultan Abdul Hamid II.

Wilhelm Liebknecht Crete and Social Democracy⁶⁶

MY opinions and Kautsky's diverge on only one point, namely with regard to the question of whether or not the position of Russia towards Turkey has today become fundamentally different from what it was previously.

Kautsky asserts it. I deny it. But before I argue with Kautsky, here are some remarks about the Press and some other comments.

I do not agree with the foolish sentimentality that — to express myself in the words of Marx — perceives in every sheep-stealer who gets into a quarrel with the Turks an 'oppressed nationality' and takes pity on him, just as little as it would ever occur to me to want to defend the Turkish government. A Belgian paper, the Brussels *Riforme*, which takes hypocritical Gladstonite phrases seriously, and splashes about in the once more gushing streams of philhellenism, that shallowest emanation of bourgeois liberalism, has called me a partisan of the Sultan — now that is a bit of a joke, which is not new, to people like us who have been labelled, every day for years, hirelings of the Austrian Emperor for being opponents of Bismarck. In addition, the new assertion that the Tsar cannot now be thinking of war against Turkey or of dividing Turkey because the capitalist development of Russia forces him into a policy of peace, I leave to one side; anyone who has seen how German capitalism, which is much more developed than Russian, favoured Bismarck's policy of conquest and rained down material means into his lap, can only laugh at such childishness.

Not that I want to deprive the nationalities of every right. By virtue of their right of self-determination, the members of a nationality obviously have the right to unite. Only, what are nationalities or nations? Among the cultured peoples there are no nations and nationalities any more, in the sense of a racial community. The Italians are a hybrid people: Romans, Greeks, Germans, Arabs, Celts, Phoenicians (Carthaginians) and heaven knows what else; so are the Spaniards: Celts, Iberians, Carthaginians (Phoenicians), Romans, Germans; so are the French: Celts, Greeks, Romans, Germans; so are the English: Celts, Romans, Germans; so are the Germans: Celts, Germans, Romans, Slavs — in East Elbia, the latter vastly predominant, so that as East Elbia rules in Germany today, German Germany is actually ruled by Slavic Germany in 'national' Germany, as once Greece was by Macedonia — the finest satire on the Nationality Principle!

Indeed — and with that I shall return to the ground of facts and practicalities — it is our duty, inasmuch as it is within our power, to support and further the cause of 'nations' that fight against their violation. However, one must then examine each case individually.

And what Marx says about the Montenegrin sheep-stealers can at least in

66. From *Verdicts*, 10 March 1897. Translated from the German by Mike Jones.

part be applied to the 'Greek' Cretans, whose Greekness is more than doubtful, whose talent for thieving and brigandage, practised at the expense of the Turks, is beyond doubt, and who have, in addition, shared in a freedom under Turkish rule which we Germans would have envied. Several stereotypical thinkers who veil their Gladstone-like hatred of the Turks with the cloak of the 'materialist conception of history' (like maiden Jettchen's thimble,⁶⁷ it is 'good for all things') have discovered that the Armenians and Greeks have to separate themselves from the Turks because their economic development is higher and their further development would be hindered by the Turks. With regard to the Cretans, this objection is certainly not correct, and I will not occupy myself further with it, certainly not in depth, because they stand on a most primitive cultural level, economically mostly lower than the Mohammedans of the island, and until now have attested just as little inclination for civilisation as the similarly economically and geographically placed Corsicans, who in spite of the utmost efforts of the French government, still today regard robbery and murder as their inalienable human right — exactly like the brave Cretans and Montenegrins. And one would not after all want to say of the French that they are 'impediments to progress', like the Turks, as the usual stereotypical phrases would have it.

However, let us leave that, and let us consider a nationality whose violation can be just as little disputed as its right to liberation: I mean the Poles.

No nation has ever been more brutally oppressed than the Poles. The divisions of Poland were disgraceful crimes, and cannot be excused by the sophistry of *raison d'état*: the destruction of Poland as a state is the blackest genocide known to history. The number of Poles is five times as great as that of the Armenians, and a hundred times as great as that of the Cretans — they were always pioneers of culture, and today they would be a defensive rampart of culture; their liberation would harm nobody but the criminals that have erased Poland from the family of states, and would hurt no interests but those of the universal enemy of human progress and freedom.

Good — so we stand one and all for the liberation of Poland! What? The eloquent champions of the Armenians and the Cretans are silent, with their enthusiasm suddenly frozen stiff. Explain that to me, Count Oerindur!

Merely the word Poland suffices to characterise the complete mendacity of Russian policy. And English policy on this question is for the present in the slipstream, and the French only an appendage, of Russian policy. A state that commits a thousand times greater injustices in its own country, and tramples underfoot the right of nationality a thousand times more brutally than the Turks ever did, cannot in truth honestly mean it to those whom it allegedly wants to deliver from the Turkish yoke. Charity begins at home — Christian love and liberation begin at home. In Russia, there is a thousand times more oppression, and in addition a thousand times more stealing, than in Turkey. Were the Russian government serious about its humanity and emancipatory air, then it would set that noble instinct in motion in its own lands. And if it is good-natured but has let

67. A character from a popular novel of the time.

itself be tempted by the soft-soap of Russian-English priests and philistines to overlook the wrongs nearer home and dwell on the Turkish outrages in the far distance — if it is serious about them, with its enthusiasm and sympathy for oppressed nations, then it has the best opportunity to demonstrate this seriousness. There is Poland! *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*⁶⁸ There in Poland is the touchstone of the fanaticism of nationality. Anyone that gets worked up for the Armenians and Cretans and has no sympathy for Poland is either a thoughtless fellow, or a miserable comedian and hypocrite. Or he has benefited from the Russian rouble.

The alliance between Russia and Turkey is nothing new. Everything has existed before, already 65 years ago, and under quite similar circumstances. Had not the powers that divided Poland often before had alliances with Poland? Is not an alliance with an enemy the best means of destroying it?

One sees that the present situation is not new, and we cannot infer a change of policy from the fact of the current Russian-Turkish alliance.

For Russia, the alliance with Turkey has the twofold advantage that — like the witch in Hänsel and Gretel — it defers the slaughter of the victim until a suitable moment, and simultaneously fattens the victim, that is, so that the process of annexation can be prepared *con amore*.⁶⁹ The restless Armenians are for the present much more useful to the Russians as Turkish subjects. They help in Turkey's dissolution, instead of weakening Russia.

Owing to the alliance with Turkey, Russia has only become even more dangerous for Europe, and its power to influence the peoples governed by Turkey in a way hostile to culture only becomes greater. It is not correct that Russia is faced with a dam by the Christian Balkan states. That was the illusion of the Napoleonic semi-democracy after the Crimean War. The only one of these states which has freed itself completely from Russian influence is Romania, where various advantageous circumstances have played a rôle in this result. Bulgaria, which strove to emancipate itself, and also seemed to be at the point of achieving this aim many times, is once more completely dependent on Russia which, by the human robbery perpetrated on Battenberg,⁷⁰ by numerous mutinies and assassination attempts, and finally by the barbaric slaughter of Stambolov,⁷¹ has manifested its civilising mission and its maintenance of the old policy of conquest with a clarity that leaves nothing to be desired. The third of the Christian Balkan states, Serbia, has one arm in the grip of Russia, and the other

68. 'Rhodes is here, leap here', by which Liebknecht means Russia need not go to Turkey (Rhodes) to prove its commitment to freedom. It can prove it here, in Poland.

69. With love.

70. A reference to the forced abdication and abduction of the German Prince of Bulgaria, Alexander of Battenberg (1857-1893), by pro-Russian Bulgarian officers in a coup in 1886. Since 1883, Alexander had increasingly angered the Tsar by his independent pro-Bulgarian policies. The coup failed, and although Alexander returned to Bulgaria to popular acclaim, he then abdicated, unwilling to rule in the face of continuing opposition from the Tsar.

71. Stefan Stambolov (1854-1895) ran Bulgaria as regent and Prime Minister from 1886 to 1894. He was steadfastly anti-Russian but ruled despotically. He fell from power when Bulgarian ruling circles decided to mend relations with the Tsar, and he was brutally murdered in a street attack a year later.

in the grip of Austria; while the fourth of these states, the robber state of Montenegro, is not only under Turkish influence, but is also on the official Russian payroll. It is feared in Vienna that the Serbs together with the Bulgarians will attack Turkey. It is feared in Vienna The giant fears the dwarf.

And why must the giant fear?

Because at home things are also done in a semi-Turkish way, and because he has not understood how to educate and win over the energy of the peoples of these rough lands.

Austria — and here is the core of the blunder — Austria is not a democratic state, and it cannot exercise any attraction on those peoples: its bleak, bone-headed bureaucracy just melts it away.

What will happen in the East now? I will not rack my brains. Who can find his way around in all this confusion? If the European war were to break out today, then Russia, as Turkey's protector that wants to prevent it being eaten up by others, would fight for the inviolability of Turkey, at the side of the Turks and the French. Tsar, Sultan and the bourgeois republic of human rights would be fraternally united. Truly Europe is not merely a sick-room — it is a mad-house.

Yes, if the French democrats and social democrats had overthrown the Russian-French government on 23 February and torn up the Russo-French alliance — if the French democrats and social democrats had succeeded in getting England and France to agree to a defensive and offensive alliance for the liberation of all oppressed nations and peoples — then we would indeed surely have had in sight a European war, and also perhaps the liberation of the Cretans, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Poles, Russians, etc. Then the Eastern Question would, along with other questions, perhaps be on the way to a satisfactory resolution.

The French democrats and social democrats have not overthrown the Russian-French ministry and have not broken up the Russo-French alliance, and under these circumstances broaching the Eastern Question would inevitably have led to a European war without the prospect of a solution that was in the interests of humanity and freedom.

It is therefore certainly better that the solution be adjourned once more.

It has to be stated that so long as Russia is the arbiter of Europe, and England, due to France's disastrous dependence on Russia, sees itself compelled to evade settling accounts with Russia, no change can ensue in the East that does not turn out to be for the benefit and the strengthening of Russia and the despotism it represents. The little Greece on which the enthusiasts rest their hopes is only a straw, and not a nice one into the bargain. And as long as France travels in Russia's slipstream and Russia controls the situation, it can enforce its will and thwart every solution that is in the interests of democracy. We cannot ignore this fact.

And to speak frankly, I believe that the autonomy promised under the protection of 'the whole of Europe' is still better for the Cretans than annexation to the Kingdom of Greece, whose administration is just as rotten and ruined as that of Turkey, and far less tolerant. Because of Greece's proverbial card-sharp

policies, an annexed Crete under Russian leadership would be involved in adventures and catastrophes, from which an autonomous Crete has the prospect of safeguarding itself amid the mutual jealousies of all the European powers.

'However, the Cretans and the other "oppressed" cannot wait!'

Alas, we social democrats are also oppressed, and our hearts beat against our ribs with anger to put an end to injustice. However, we must check our impatience.

Tsarism is the last support of capitalism. Together with the latter, it will be seen off by the liberator of peoples, international socialism.

The Eastern Question will be solved neither in Crete nor in the Balkan Peninsula, but in the metropolitan centres of Europe, first of all, with foresight, in Paris. The die will very likely be cast there first. The unworthiness of the alliance of the French Republic with Russian despotism will be made brutally clear to the French by the Eastern crisis, and by the despicable and ridiculous diplomatic buffoonery in which France participates.

The spectre of the Three Emperors' League⁷² is at work, too. If France detaches itself from Russia, then the foundation of Russia's supreme power disappears, and it is once more the giant with feet of clay that cannot even do away with Turkey on the open field of battle.

The end of the Russo-French alliance is the beginning of the democratic and revolutionary resolution of the Eastern Question.

Eduard Bernstein Crete and the Russian Danger⁷³

THE discussion on the question of which position German Social Democracy must take on the issue of Crete has now at last been taken up in *Vorwärts*, the main party organ. In the issue for 4 March this year, Kautsky has set out in detail that Social Democracy can today, without fear of playing into the hands of Tsarism, come out in favour of satisfying the wishes of the Greeks and the Christian Cretans, while Liebknecht, in the issue of *Vorwärts* for 10 March, in just as much detail, has set out his view that there is no basis for Social Democracy to come out in favour of the Greeks and the Cretans, who for the time being can, on the contrary, be satisfied by the creation of an autonomous Crete guaranteed by Europe, until the victory of 'the liberator of peoples, international socialism' puts an end to all oppression.

72. An intermittent alliance between Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia during the 1870s and 1880s which kept breaking down over conflicting interests, primarily in the Balkans.

73. This article was dated 15 March 1897, and appeared in *Die Neue Zeit*, May 1897. Translated from the German by Mike Jones

Liebknecht begins by speaking of the 'silly sentimentality' which 'sees an oppressed nationality in every sheep-stealer who comes into conflict with the Turks'. Were I to reply according to the principle of *à corsaire, corsaire et demi*,⁷⁴ then I should have to speak of the shocking brutality of ridiculing every people struggling for liberation from Turkish rule as sheep-stealers. However, Liebknecht will without further ado believe me when I say that I am not remotely interested in accusing him of brutality. I know that there are better motives that cause him to use such unjustified invective. He should, however, be convinced that those of his comrades who today argue for another conception than his of matters in the East have more solid reasons than silly sentimentality, stereotypical routinism and thoughtlessness.

Nothing is easier than to portray oppressed peoples as of lesser worth. National oppression almost always means economic strangulation and moral depravity. The latter, for example, has also showed itself in the people whose cause is upheld so gallantly by Liebknecht, the Poles. Yet which Social Democrat will dare contest, on account of talk of the 'duplicity' of the Poles, the right of the Polish people freely to develop its nationality? Liebknecht thinks that, when one speaks of the Poles, the supporters of the Armenians and the Cretans should suddenly fall silent. But is the fact that the Poles are not yet free, that their liberation from the Russian yoke is at present an impossibility — so impossible that one cannot speak of any national independence movement worth mentioning among the Poles — is this fact a reason to come out against the fulfilment of the wishes of the Cretans and Armenians, when they can be fulfilled without harm to European Democracy? What would Liebknecht think of a person who opposed the Berlin bricklayers struggling for better wages because the Silesian weavers were worse paid? He would at least demand proof that the success of the former would threaten the situation of the latter. It is, however, incomprehensible how the unification of Crete with Greece would harm the cause of the Poles. Liebknecht presents no trace of evidence for such a link between the Cretan and Polish questions. So we can really omit Poland from this discussion.

But what is it that makes otherwise so broad-minded a man like Liebknecht suddenly become narrow-minded and let himself proclaim, I would say, a hatred of Christians, with all the criticism of the Christian religion and Christian governments he would otherwise be the first to condemn as ahistorical? It is the Russian danger, namely the word taken in its double sense. First is the real Russian danger, the threat which the Tsarist Empire represents for the internal development of Germany and Europe respectively, an empire in which Liebknecht sees an enemy compared to which all others vanish into thin air. On this point, I am quite in agreement with him, and he will find the 'producer of materialist stereotypes' at his side. But besides this real Russian danger, there is yet a second Russian danger, which is certainly also real, but is not based on reality but on fiction. It is the danger of seeing Russia there where it is not, and as a result attacking it where one meets it least.

74. Setting a thief to catch a thief.

Now it is a fact that perhaps with the exception of Germany, no great power so energetically opposes the annexation of Crete to Greece than Russia itself. The motives that determine the attitude of the German Empire on this question are 'like the ways of God, inscrutable'. The German Empire itself has no interest in Crete not becoming part of Greece. Russia's motives are displayed much more clearly. Tsarist Russia has an interest in the question of Crete not being resolved, but being kept open for some convenient moment. And there is no better way of keeping the question open than Crete, with its mixed population, being declared 'autonomous' and placed under the combined occupation of the Powers. The squabbling on the island will be perpetuated and possibly even increased by squabbling with and between the occupation troops. The Cretan Mohammedans would just as likely submit to the Greek sovereign as did the Mohammedans who were awarded districts in Greece by the Congress of Berlin and who have their representatives in the Greek Chamber. The Greek population of the island will oppose it with every type of resistance. It will provide a provisional arrangement that satisfies nobody and nourishes every passion. Greece will be humiliated — *cui bono?*⁷⁵ Russia, Russia and once more for Russia's sake.

I would regard it as wrong, but nevertheless understandable, if Liebknecht favoured Crete remaining with Turkey. But it is lost to Turkey, which everyone today realises. Yet Liebknecht admits that Turkey has ceased to be a serious hindrance to Russia's route towards the Bosphorus. If there is now any power that can be dangerous to Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean, then, despite its financial distress, it is economically emerging Greece. So keeping Greece down is very sensible on the part of Tsarist diplomacy. Greece ought not to be stronger than it is now, and its process of consolidation must be postponed for as long as possible.

In the *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*,⁷⁶ the idea has been developed that on their own the newly-formed Balkan states constitute an insufficient dam to Russia's position of power in the Black Sea. Only a great power of the first rank, and hence perhaps Austria, is capable of this, though the way to the Black Sea and to the Turkish inheritance is blocked by precisely these states. The way things have turned out, however, in my opinion, means that there is no need for Austria to get hold of the Turkish inheritance, and what the Balkan states cannot do alone can be done by means of an alliance with other states, of which, at worst, there would be no lack. It depends on giving them the possibility of becoming independent of Russia. For the rest, however, we must not forget that the Russian danger lies primarily at the centre of the Tsarist Empire and not on the periphery, and that with the coming of the break-up of Tsarist absolutism, when Russia obtains a constitutional form of existence that no longer threatens the liberal development of Europe, the whole question of the Dardanelles will lose its significance.

75. To whose benefit?

76. The German Social Democratic newspaper in Dresden, Saxony.

For a long time, the Russian danger involved progressive democracy in Europe, against its natural inclinations, taking a position of using force to oppose liberation movements towards which it would otherwise have adopted a benevolent attitude. Today this compulsion no longer exists. Not that the Russian danger would have been lessened. On the contrary, at present it is rather greater than previously. As long as Tsarist Russia had an interest in acting as the liberator of the Balkans, it had to exercise much restraint in order to play this rôle, which it no longer needs to today. It can pursue a much more unified policy than 20 years ago, and it can act more consistently as the protector of order and conservative interests.

But the more its policies are simplified, the more will this be recognised by the people. And since no people, least of all an aspiring one, lives on bread alone, the more Russia ceases to appear externally as a liberator, the more precisely will broad circles of the Russian people strive for political freedom. This will ensure that the dreams of Tsarism are not fulfilled.

Liebknecht's article ends very pessimistically: everyone is either a conscious accomplice or bamboozled tool of Russia, Europe is a madhouse, Europe's democracy is nowhere at all, etc. Until victorious socialism puts an end to all misfortune, salvation hangs on one thread: the dissolution of the Franco-Russian alliance: 'If France detaches itself from Russia, then the foundation of Russia's supreme power disappears and it is once more the giant with feet of clay that cannot even finish Turkey off on the open field of battle.' That the dissolution of the Russian alliance would be an event of the greatest significance is beyond doubt, even if the effect on Russia itself would perhaps be less important than is portrayed here — though the giant's feet have become somewhat stronger in the two decades since the Russo-Turkish War. But that is secondary. More important is that no factor has had a stronger effect in detaching France from Tsarist Russia than the pro-Greek attitude of the French people. And it is precisely philhellenism that Liebknecht makes contemptible with all manner of phrases, and ridicules as the shallowest emanation of liberalism. Everything can be exaggerated, including friendship with the Greeks. But at the moment this seems very justified — if for no other reason than that they have surely given the democratic movements in Europe a mighty impulse, and because they have given the best elements in France the opportunity to show the French people where the Franco-Russian alliance is heading. Instead of counteracting it, German Social Democracy has every reason to support the movement for Greek rights. Russia's evil influence on the development of things in Germany is great enough. It would be really fateful if German Social Democracy were misled by its exuberant opposition to official Russia into taking care of the Tsar's own business for him. At this moment that would be the greatest 'Russian danger'.

Christian Rakovsky

The Eastern Question and the International Socialist Party"

THE political autonomy of the Balkan peoples has enabled their economic development and the birth of the socialist party. The fall of Turkish rule in Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia has taken with it that wall of barbarism that stopped the socialist tide at the foot of the Carpathians, the Danube and the Balkans. Today the international socialist party can be proud. It has thousands and thousands of supporters in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Greece. In Bulgaria and Romania we have representatives in parliament, a well-organised press, circles and unions; in short, our party for a long time has been on that serious and productive path from which it can only emerge victorious. We can say the same for Serbia, except with a few small qualifications. Only Greece does not yet seem to be very hospitable terrain for socialism. The reason is chauvinism, which not only ravages some Western countries, but also still more certain Eastern countries, and especially Greece. It is the sad past of this country that is the fundamental cause, and Greek unity is the best antidote.

Yes, it is in the interests of the socialist cause in the East to support the national tendencies of the peoples subjected to the Sultan.

Of course, we admit that the question is not very simple, and if it is the subject of so many controversies this is because of the serious and complex character that it takes on as a result of the intervention of the involved states, and especially Russia. It is very true that the manoeuvres of the Russian Empire must keep the international socialist party in a state of constant alertness. At present, 'more than ever, the long arms of Russian diplomacy' — as the first Manifesto of the International (1864) says — 'manage to rummage around in all the European cabinets', and thus to act powerfully on the internal affairs of all the countries. Every Russian success will have deplorable repercussions in the internal relations of the majority of European states. Hence the Eastern Question, which occupies almost the whole of Russian foreign policy, becomes for the international socialist party not only a foreign policy question, but even, and especially, a question of internal policy.

The concern is often expressed that granting autonomy to the different Christian provinces will mean that Turkey will be weakened and will serve the designs of Russian diplomacy.

This policy, which, despite everything, tends to the conservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, is the policy that Europe has followed for more than a century. But what has it achieved? Is the existence of Turkey more

77. *La Petite République*, 14, 15, 16 April 1897. Translated from the French by Andrej Živković.

certain than it was a hundred years ago? Has the power of Russian diplomacy been destroyed forever? Neither one nor the other has happened. By its absurdities, this policy has come to display its complete powerlessness. Not only is it not an effective means of fighting Russia, as we will show, it even does its work.

In fact, Russia has exploited the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, *but this weakness is not of her making*. Turkish power used to be based on the warrior customs of the tribes of Central Asia, when the patriarchal mode of existence was at its height; and the Sultans of that period were the foremost soldiers who fought with great courage. The Turks came to Europe with their own civilisation, with their familial and property relations that were absolutely different to ours. But as soon as the Turks abandoned the sword for the plough, and the nomadic and warrior life for a sedentary and agricultural life, their power began to move fatally towards its own decline.

Russia profited from this state of decomposition to increase her power and territory at the expense of Turkey. And what was Western Europe to do? Instead of sustaining the life of that man whose sickness was organic and incurable — his historical degeneration — who was incapable of adopting European civilisation, except for its vices and faults, it should have found him heirs that could replace him before he was stripped by Russia.

These *legitimate* heirs to the Turkish empire were just beginning to show themselves.

The rebirth of the national idea after the Napoleonic wars did not remain without influence also in the East. The Greek, Serb, Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian peoples, one after another, awoke to demand their political and national independence. It only remained for the Western countries to profit from this movement, to encourage it and thus to prepare the advance posts of Western civilisation in the East.

But it was Russia who profited from these movements. She channelled them in the direction of her interests. She soon began, in effect, to play a rôle which sat very ill with her, but which she carried out so well, that of protector of the oppressed. Under this pretext, she declared war after war on Turkey and sent emissaries to preach freedom. She supported Romanian and Serbian independence. Through Greek traders in Odessa she sent material aid to the Greeks, while one of the Princes Orlov⁷⁸ went to Greece to take charge of the insurrection. And when, after several uprisings in Bulgaria — otherwise brutally repressed and followed by such terrible reprisals that they roused the indignation of the whole of Europe — the Bulgarians found themselves in a state of complete despair, Russia sent its emissary Ionin⁷⁹ — one of the future diplomatic

78. Count Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov (1734-1783) and his brother Count Aleksei Grigoryevich Orlov (1737-1808) were involved in fomenting a Greek revolt in the 1760s as part of Catherine the Great's expansionist designs in the Balkans. Grigory was in fact Catherine's lover.

79. VS Ionin was Russia's diplomatic representative in Bulgaria who played an important rôle in aiding and abetting pro-Russian sympathisers in the country, both before and after Bulgaria gained its autonomy at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

agents of Bulgaria — who reformed the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee⁸⁰ in Bucharest (Romania) to prepare a new insurrection (1876).

Thus, by way of a most comprehensible contradiction, Russia, which defended 'legitimism' in the West and restored kings who had been chased from their thrones, acted the rabble-rouser and played at revolution in the East. It is also true that each time after she engaged in a war on behalf of her Christian 'brothers', she managed to incorporate a new province into her immense territory. It is also true that the peoples liberated by her were sooner or later bound to fall under her yoke, and if this has not yet completely happened in all cases it is certainly not her fault! In the Balkans she employed all the methods that had previously been used to great success elsewhere. Thus in the Crimea she incited the Tartars to rise up against Turkish domination, while at the same time promising them that if they united with her she would grant them a certain autonomy. Their autonomy has now departed to join the constitution promised to Poland!

Let us add to all this, that if she had been given the chance, Russia would have acted in the same way towards the Balkan peoples. Unfortunately, the peoples are unable to divine the ulterior motives of the governments: they are simplistic in their reasoning, and as Russia helped them and defended them against Turkish barbarism they extended all of their sympathies to the executioners of Poland who had become for them 'protectors' and 'liberators'.

Moreover, Russia was able to play with the fire of revolution in the East with all the more ease since the great mass of the Russian people was frozen in a state of servitude and ignorance. There were no repercussions to be feared.

Why did the West, by defending the cause of freedom in the East, not take this formidable weapon from the hands of Russia and turn it against her? Was this the result of a simple lack of foresight and diplomatic error. Obviously not. In all this there are other causes which more obviously explain the inaction and conservative spirit of Europe in the East.

Already eight months ago in our report to the London Congress,⁸¹ we Bulgarian socialists spent some time emphasising the preponderant role played by *bondholders* in the East, that is, the bondholders of the Ottoman debt. In fact it is clear that none of the states that have freed themselves from Turkey (Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Romania) and those who will liberate themselves tomorrow (Armenia, Crete, Macedonia) will accept the burdensome legacy of the Sultan's debt. This is why for a certain class of very influential people the conservation of the Turkish empire appears as a supreme interest.

On the other hand, Turkey at present, with the regime of *Capitulations*,⁸² that make a veritable Pasha of every swindler, constitutes the best imaginable colony for exploitation.

80. Established in 1870 by the revolutionary nationalist Lyuben Karavelov (1834-1879), this Committee sought to organise Bulgarians in readiness for an insurrection against the Ottomans.

81. Of the Second Socialist International, held in the last week of July 1896.

82. *Capitulations* were special privileges (tax concessions, legal immunities) afforded Europeans who resided and traded in the Ottoman Empire. This meant that Ottoman trade increasingly fell into foreign hands.

As for Russia, where industry is not developed, and where there is no surplus capital that can be lent, she does not have any financial or industrial interest in Turkey. Her hands were not tied, and she had her sights solely on her political goal.

Here are the totality of causes which on the one hand have led to the passivity of Europe and on the other have given complete freedom of action to Russia and determined her success. While Europe did not wish to hear any talk of the autonomy of these peoples, and said through Lord Chatham, 'I have nothing to talk about with a man who does not see the interests of England (and Europe) in the conservation of the Ottoman empire', Russia worked to establish this autonomy and to consolidate its own power.

Thus, the Western bourgeoisie, through its commercial egoism and its divisions and internal struggles for trading markets, has failed in its historic rôle in the East. Believing that it was combating Russia by supporting Turkey, it merely played her game by rendering her the indispensable protector of the Christians abandoned by the West, and by making her a false instrument of progress. Full responsibility for Russian predominance in the East belongs to capitalist and bourgeois Europe.

It is up to the international socialist party to do what the bourgeoisie has not done. This rôle, undertaken in the interest of civilisation itself and of the socialist cause in the East, has become all the easier now that Russia, as we see, through its new positioning on the question of Constantinople, is exposing its own flanks and offering them up to our attack.

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III: Bulgarian Socialism and the Macedonian National Liberation Movement, 1903-08

Introduction

IN the period from the Congress of Berlin of 1878 to the First World War, Macedonia was at the very heart of the Eastern Question, the question of the future of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, and thus of Balkan politics. It was the cause of the assassination of a former Bulgarian Prime Minister in 1895,¹ the scene of a failed national insurrection in 1903, the epicentre of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, and the object of a war amongst the Balkan states in 1913 after their defeat of Turkey. Ottoman Macedonia — encompassing today's Republic of Macedonia, northern Greece and south-western Bulgaria — guarded the gateway between Europe and Asia. The state that controlled it would not only control the path to Asia, but also dominate the Balkans.

The Macedonian Question originated at the Congress of Berlin of 1878. Following Turkey's defeat in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, Russia created an enormous Bulgarian state at the Treaty of San Stefano of 1878, including most of Macedonia, as a staging post in its drive to Constantinople.² The intervention of the other powers at Berlin whittled the new Bulgarian state down to less than half its original size. Macedonia was to remain under direct Turkish

1. Stefan Stambolov (1854-1895), Regent and Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1886-94), repressed the Macedonian movement in Bulgaria as part of a deal with Turkey enabling peaceful Bulgarian religious and cultural penetration into Macedonia. In 1895, now out of power, he was literally hacked to death on a Sofia street by a Macedonian revolutionary, and his hands were severed for public display.
2. As Stavrianos notes: 'With the exception of Constantinople, Adrianople and Saloniki [Thessalonica] it included virtually all the territory between the Danube in the north, the Black Sea in the east, the Aegean sea in the south, and Lake Ohrid and beyond in the west. Thus a greater Bulgaria was created and European Turkey virtually annihilated.' (LS Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, New York, 1958, p409)

administration. The territorial settlement established at Berlin set the dissatisfied Balkan states of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece against one another and pushed them into a three-cornered struggle for control over Ottoman Macedonia. The fact that Ottoman Macedonia comprised a medley of ethnic and religious groups³ — according to the estimates of one Bulgarian socialist writing in 1913, of a total population of three million by the 1900s, 29 per cent was Bulgarian, 21 per cent Albanian, 18 per cent Turkish, 8 per cent Greek and 7 per cent Serbian⁴ — many of whose members were as yet of undeclared nationality, provided a suitable pretext for intervention. Teachers, diplomatic agents and later armed bands were sent from Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece to join the national churches in the struggle for the allegiance of the Orthodox Slav Christians of Macedonia.

In this context, the emerging and embattled national consciousness of the Slav Macedonians found expression in a dual Macedonian-Bulgarian identity, that is, for many the adoption of a Bulgarian identity coexisted with a sense of also being 'Macedonian'.⁵ This fluid and hybrid identity, rather like the Montenegrin-Serb identity of the Montenegrins, or that of the Austrian Germans, has over history resulted in a variety of conflicting nationalist movements and state allegiances. In this period, the Macedonian-Bulgarian movement crystallised into two antagonistic currents.

The first was the celebrated Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO), founded in Salonika in 1893, the creation of a Slav Macedonian intelligentsia steeped in the Bulgarian national revolutionary tradition. Its aim was to launch a revolutionary struggle to destroy Ottoman rule and establish an 'autonomous Macedonia'. The second, the Supreme Macedonian Committee, formed in 1895 out of the fusion of Macedonian émigré organisations in Bulgaria, deployed the demand for 'autonomy' as a Trojan horse for the eventual unification of Macedonia with Bulgaria. From 1895, the 'Supremacists', as they

3. Muslims included Albanians, Turks and other Turkic peoples, and Slav Muslims (Pomaks). Orthodox Christians included Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Slavs of no or indeterminate national consciousness. The Vlachs, who were also Orthodox, were a branch of the Romanian people, leading to periodic Romanian claims on them, but many had been hellenised and thus were indistinguishable from the Greeks. Jews and Gypsies made up the other significant minorities.
4. Hristo Kabackchiev, *Kāim Balkhanska Federatsiya (Towards a Balkan Federation)*, Sofia, 1913, p36. There are no reliable figures for the size of any of these groups. Official Ottoman statistics were calculated on the basis of confessional allegiance rather than ethnicity, while those produced in the Balkans were based on a mixture of language and imputed ethnicity. See Fikret Adanir, 'The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912', in Andreas Kappeller (ed), *The Formation of National Identities*, Volume 4, New York, 1992, pp164-5.
5. This is a very contentious question. It is probable that those Slavs living along the borders of Bulgaria tended to see themselves as Bulgarians; a much smaller group along the Serbian border sometimes claimed to be Serbs; and many along the Greek border called themselves Greek, but for large numbers this was a religious affiliation and not an ethnic identity. The remainder had not yet come to national consciousness, but were often compelled to do so under external nationalist pressure. It was unusual in this period to identify a person as belonging to a 'Macedonian' nationality; the term had a more politico-geographic than ethnic meaning. See Stavrianos, *op cit*, p520; and Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movement, 1893-1903*, Durham and London, 1988, pp19-21.

became known because of their claim to lead the Macedonian movement, launched armed bands into Ottoman Macedonia to provoke Great Power intervention to achieve the goal of a greater Bulgaria. IMRO, although it initially shared the goals and tactics of the Supremacists, shifted after 1896 to the idea that Macedonia could not be liberated by outside powers, but only through peasant revolution. For IMRO, only an independent Macedonian state or an autonomous Macedonian entity within a Balkan federation could ever be truly free of its neighbours. These alternative paths could not be reconciled, and the Supremacists after 1899 set out to destroy IMRO.

Recognising the pivotal rôle of the Macedonian Question in Balkan politics, the Bulgarian Social Democratic Labour Party (BRSDP), but particularly the revolutionary Narrow tendency in the party, played a major rôle in this process of differentiation. First at the level of ideas, the Narrows developed a federalist solution to the Macedonian Question, based on Macedonian independence within a Balkan federation. The basis of this position was developed as far back as 1885 by the Macedonian-Bulgarian founder of the revolutionary tendency in Bulgarian socialism, Dimităr Blagoev. For Blagoev, Macedonia did not belong to Bulgaria or any other Balkan state, but to the Macedonians, to all the different nations of Macedonia. Indeed, the internecine conflict amongst the Balkan states over Macedonia would benefit only the Great Powers in their drive to dominate the region.⁶ This general approach influenced the rising left in IMRO, led by the charismatic organiser and socialist sympathiser Gotsé Delchev,⁷ and via the latter became official IMRO policy in 1902.⁸

Secondly, Blagoev's Narrows influenced the development of a socialist group from among the migrant and immigrant Macedonian working-class community in Bulgaria. In the course of the 1890s, it guided the latter's passage from the populist socialism of Botev, with its focus on the peasantry, to a Marxist worldview oriented towards the proletariat. Under the leadership of Vasil Glavinov, the pioneer of socialism in Macedonia, the Macedonian Narrow social democrats were to strive doggedly both inside and outside IMRO, in extraordinarily difficult conditions, to establish an *independent workers' movement* in Ottoman Macedonia that would be the driving force of an *independent and mass revolutionary national liberation movement*.

Thirdly, the party sought to participate in the nascent Macedonian movement in Bulgaria, the Supreme Committee, in order to push it in a revolutionary

6. See Dimităr Blagoev, 'Balkanskata Federatsiya i Makedoniya' ('The Balkan Federation and Macedonia'), *Makedonski Glas*, 20 April 1885.

7. Gotsé Delchev (1872-1903), the legendary IMRO leader, was a proponent of an *autonomous* Macedonian liberation movement, of Macedonia's liberation by revolutionary means, and of a Balkan confederation. He opposed the Ilinden Uprising, and died in a skirmish with Ottoman troops on its very eve.

8. IMRO's goal was now 'to unite in one whole all the discontented elements in Macedonia and the Adrianople area, irrespective of nationality, to win full political autonomy for these two provinces through revolution', thus opening IMRO to non-Bulgarian Macedonians. See K. Pardev, 'Ustav i pravilnik na VMRO pred Ilindenko-Preobrazhenското vstanie' ('The statutes and rules of IMRO before the Ilinden Uprising'), *Istorički Pregled*, no 25, 1969, pp68-81.

and socialist direction. However, the rise of a group of Bulgarian army officers with close connections with the court to the leadership of the Supreme Committee in 1900-01, and inspired by greater Bulgarian ambitions, threw the rationale behind socialist participation in it into crisis. Two opposing points of view were presented in the debate that followed in the pages of the socialist press. The first, articulated by Dimo Hadzhi Dimov, a Macedonian-Bulgarian supporter of the Narrow tendency in the party, considered that socialists had a duty to stay and fight to prevent the committee from degenerating into an instrument of the 'Greater Bulgarian bourgeoisie'.⁹ The second, represented by Gavril Georgiev,¹⁰ the editor of the Narrows' paper, *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, on behalf of the Central Committee, claimed that this had already happened, and called on party members to withdraw from the Supreme Committee. In his opinion, the task of the party should be to aid the real liberation movement in Macedonia by exposing the Supremacists in their policy of conquest towards Macedonia.¹¹ In the end, the Georgiev position won out, as even socialists like Dimov left the committee to join IMRO. Clear where its loyalties lay, the party leapt to IMRO's defence when the Supremacists tried in 1901-02 to seize control of it in a series of armed provocations and attacks in Macedonia.

The Supremacist 'Gorna Dzhumaya Uprising' of October 1902 brought IMRO to its knees.¹² As the Supremacists retreated to the safety of Bulgaria, IMRO found itself on the defensive against massively reinforced Turkish forces who went around slaughtering Christians and wreaking havoc across Macedonia. IMRO, no longer master of its own destiny, was now forced into a premature uprising that was strenuously opposed by its left wing. On St Elijah's Day, 2 August 1903, the ill-fated Ilinden Uprising commenced. Its aim was to force the Great Powers to intervene to impose reforms on Turkey. The revolt was limited to a minority of the Slav Macedonians, except at the scene of its only real success. In the mountain-top town of Kruševo, Vlach and Macedonian forces under the leadership of the Narrow socialist Nikola Karev¹³ took power, established a multi-ethnic revolutionary government, and proclaimed a fleeting 'Kruševo Republic' before being overwhelmed by massive Turkish detachments. After two months, the Turks prevailed and took ghoulish revenge, massacring thousands of innocent civilians, destroying over 100 villages and forcing 50 000 to flee into the mountains and face the onset of winter.

Now the Great Powers did indeed intervene, but not to award Macedonia

9. See 'Da uchastvuваме li v Makedonskoto dvizhenie?' ('Should We Participate in the Macedonian Movement?'), *Obraboto Delo*, no 19, 20 June 1901, pp.302-3. *Obraboto Delo* (Common Cause) was the bi-monthly review of the reformist Broad faction of the then unified BRSDP.
10. Gavril Georgiev (1870-1917), one of original leaders of the BRSDP and then the Narrows, member of its Central Committee, 1894-1909, and co-editor of the Narrow paper, *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* (The Worker's Paper, 1897-1939) in 1897 and 1900-09.
11. See 'Makedonskoto dvizhenie i rabotnicheskata partiya' ('The Macedonian Movement and the Workers' Party'), *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, nos 45-47; 6, 13 and 20 July 1901.
12. Gorna Dzhumaya is today Blagoevgrad, a town in south-west Bulgaria, near the border with the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).
13. Nikola Karev (1877-1905) was a Macedonian Narrow socialist and IMRO leader (1901-03).

with its autonomy. The Müritz Agreement of October 1903 between Russia and Austria-Hungary sought to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans. But it did provide for an international police force to be sent to supervise the mafia-like Turkish gendarmerie and to prevent corruption and misrule — which of course it miserably failed to do — and in general keep a lid on things. Macedonia was now overrun by Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian guerrilla bands that terrorised the Slav Macedonian peasantry, forcing entire villages at gun-point to convert from one national church to another.

Despite their opposition to a premature rising in Macedonia, the Narrow Macedonian socialists had played an illustrious rôle as IMRO guerrilla leaders in Ilinden. Its failure led them and the Narrows, who had just split with the reformist Broad socialists, to conclude that the leadership of the struggle would now pass to the Macedonian proletariat, the really revolutionary class.¹⁴ Hence the Narrow Macedonian socialists withdrew from IMRO, and from 1904 set out to organise the urban proletariat of Macedonia as the Revolutionary Social Democratic Group of Macedonia and Thrace. But, just when the Narrows had written it off, IMRO shifted to the left.

With the supporters of the Supremacists in IMRO on the defensive, the left, now led by the feared guerrilla leader of agrarian socialist sympathies, Yané Sandansky, took control of the organisation after 1905 and sought to remodel it according to the principles of revolutionary internationalism. Here we reproduce a shortened version of the 'Directive for the Future Activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation' (1904), by the Narrow socialist Dimo Hadzhi Dimov, the ideologist of the IMRO left, outlining the latter's revolutionary alternative to the failure of Ilinden.¹⁵ Dimov criticised Ilinden as nothing more than a rebellion artificially provoked from above, and he called instead for a revolution from below, based on the autonomous struggle of the Macedonian people itself for freedom. To lead such a struggle, IMRO had to abandon the old centralised structures in order to enable mass initiative, and it had to open its ranks to all the peoples of Macedonia. In practice, this meant a turn towards the peasant masses. Finally, the revolution could not stop at an independent Macedonia, since the latter could not lastingly guarantee the freedom of its peoples, but would aim at a Balkan federation.

It is noteworthy that there was nothing specifically socialist about this position. While ostensibly a Marxist, Dimov in practice remained a revolutionary

14. See 'Makedonskoto Vústanie' ('The Macedonian Uprising'), *Rubnometshki Vestnik*, 4 September 1903. The Narrows greeted the Uprising with sympathy, whilst warning that its lack of preparation would lead to tragic consequences. Once the causes of the uprising became clearer, they denounced it as an adventure fouted upon the Macedonian people by the Bulgarian court and government that played into the hands of the Great Powers. See NH (Nikola Harlakov), 'Makedonskoto Vústanie' ('The Macedonian Uprising'), *Cherven Narodni Kalendar za 1904* (*The Red People's Calendar*, 1904), Sofia, 1903, pp.46-8.

15. The *Directive* was co-written with Dimităr Mirazhiev, a socialist (ex-Narrow) and member of the IMRO left, and co-editor with Dimov of *Konstitutsionna Zarya* (*Constitutional Dawn*, 1908), the paper of Sandansky's Seres group in IMRO. He became a founder of the People's Federative Party (Bulgarian Section) (1909-10) after the Young Turk revolution.

democrat who had advanced little beyond the Bulgarian national revolutionary tradition of Botev, with its focus on the peasantry. Although a Narrow socialist, Dimov was in fact closer to the Broad socialist view that the foundation of a Macedonian socialist party must wait until after the democratic revolution, given the weakness of the Macedonian proletariat and the more general backwardness of Ottoman society.¹⁶ The policy of Dimov, like that of an influential group of ex-Narrow socialists who gravitated into IMRO, was to be a barrier to the formation of an independent workers' movement in Macedonia.¹⁷

The shift to the left in IMRO found a sympathetic response on the part of the Narrow leader Blagoev in an article of June 1905, 'On the Macedonian Question', an edited version of which we include here. Acknowledging the positive developments in IMRO, Blagoev recommended that the Macedonian party comrades rejoin the organisation to push it towards revolutionary socialism. At the same time, he also called for independent socialist organisation in Macedonia wherever possible as the best means of giving the national movement a really revolutionary character. This article caused consternation in the ranks of the Narrow socialists as it appeared to contradict the new party line with respect to IMRO after Ilinden.

It was immediately attacked by a Macedonian Narrow socialist, writing under the pseudonym 'A Gorov', in an article entitled 'Once Again on the Macedonian Question', reproduced in edited form below. 'Gorov' accused Blagoev of re-treating to the pre-Ilinden party policy of participation in IMRO with the goal of transforming the latter from a terrorist organisation into a mass, revolutionary party based on the urban working class. IMRO could not be won to socialism because 'socialists with guns', that is, socialists in IMRO, became submerged in guerrilla activity, and thereby ceased to be socialists. 'Gorov' accepted that where the bourgeois revolution remained incomplete, socialists should offer conditional support to bourgeois movements for liberation that pursued a *consistent revolutionary-democratic* policy. But this is just what was lacking in IMRO. As an organisation based on the petit-bourgeoisie, a vacillating class doomed by history to extinction, IMRO could neither formulate nor pursue a coherent or independent revolutionary policy. Ilinden proved the point. 'Gorov' concluded that

16. The Macedonian policy of the reformist Broads was limited to the demand for autonomy for Macedonia and for a progressive Bulgarian coalition government to work towards this goal. Because the Broads did not proceed from the idea of a Balkan federation as the only solution to the Macedonian Question, their approach was indistinguishable from mainstream Bulgarian nationalism. See Georgi Pürvanov, *Balgarskata ratsionaldemokratiya i Makedonskoyat vopros ot kraya na XIX vek do 1918 godina* (Bulgarian Social Democracy and the Macedonian Question from the End of the Nineteenth Century to 1918), Sofia, 1997, passim.
17. One of their number, Angel Tsmov, later commented that 'very few Macedonian revolutionaries went to Macedonia with the specific task of organising the workers into class organisations. They went to take an active part in the struggle being waged by IMRO, which they considered as the first, necessary step for the preparation of conditions for a subsequent independent proletarian movement. This ... did not directly favour the formation of an independent workers' movement in Macedonia; it even hindered it to a certain extent.' See 'Makedonskite partii sled mladoturskiya prevrat' ('The Macedonian Parties after the Young Turk Coup'), *Makedonska Misl*, no 5-6, 1947, p188.

socialists should not offer any support to IMRO as a whole. By contrast, Sandansky and Dimov's 'decentralists' could be given conditional support, but only if they proved to be really autonomous of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie. As with Blagoev, the key for 'Gorov' was the need to develop independent working-class organisation in Macedonia. Without working-class leadership, there could be no really revolutionary movement in Macedonia. This suggests that the dispute between them was over tactics rather than principles.¹⁸

What is striking is the way in which their arguments looked forward to the theses of the early Communist International on the relationship of socialists in the colonial or semi-colonial world to bourgeois or petit-bourgeois movements of national liberation.¹⁹ Their common starting point was that socialists should only support bourgeois liberation movements that were really revolutionary. And their common strategy was based on the idea that the struggle for national liberation could not and should not be separated from the struggle for socialism. Only the proletariat was capable of leading a consistently revolutionary struggle for liberation, implying a policy of independent class struggle against both imperialism and the national bourgeoisie.

By contrast, Dimov's strategy exemplified a danger that was made notorious by Stalinism, but which was to face all socialists in the backward countries. Dimov, like the petit-bourgeois democrats of the IMRO left, separated the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for socialism into two distinct historical stages.²⁰ He thus represented the tendency to dissolve the concept of the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution into the bourgeois notion of a revolutionary-democratic 'popular' or 'national' movement. In practice, this either meant the abdication of political independence, tailing the national bourgeoisie, or, where this class was weak or divided, of playing the rôle of such a bourgeoisie.

These opposing approaches to the national movement led to radically differ-

18. Blagoev was forced by the hue and cry in the party into a rather pathetic retraction where he claimed that he had only argued for entry into IMRO where it was not possible to organise independently. See the Editorial Note to 'Gorov's' article in *Novo Vreme*, no 11, November 1905, pp3-4. The results of work outside IMRO were meagre, the main problem being the hostility of IMRO to competitor organisations in Macedonia (backed up by assassinations). Hence, notwithstanding the impression given at the time, Macedonian socialists continued to participate in IMRO, as the memoirs of one of their number, Aleksa Martulkov, testify. See the latter's *Moeto udelenie vo revolucionarni borbi na Makedonija* (*My Participation in the Revolutionary Struggles in Macedonia*), Skopje, 1954, passim.

19. See 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions', *The Communist International in Lenin's Time: Workers' of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*, Volume 1, New York, 1991, pp283-90.

20. Yane Sandansky once remarked approvingly: 'Gotsé [Delchev] was a Socialist, but he correctly differentiated between the immediate tasks and the long-term ones. Gotsé would often repeat: "Our first task is to turn the virgin soil, to clear away the thorns and roots of political and economic slavery, to drain the swamps of national animosities, and to gather together in one whole the working people and all democratic forces. It is for the next generation to sow the seeds of brotherhood and equality. We are the heirs of the men of the National Revival — the Socialists will be our heirs."' (Cited in Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection: The Life of Yane Sandansky*, London, 1988, p329)

ent responses to the Young Turk revolution that broke out in 1908 in Macedonia. For socialists like Dimov, the hour of the proletariat had still not struck, and so, with the IMRO Left, they sought to create a broad, revolutionary democratic organisation of all the Ottoman nationalities with the aim of transforming the Ottoman Empire into a democratic federation of nationalities. Other IMRO socialists worked to build both a workers' movement and a democratic movement of the petit-bourgeoisie in parallel. Only the Macedonian Narrows consistently worked for an independent Ottoman workers' movement, and for the leading rôle of the proletariat in the democratic revolution.

Andreja Živković

Dimo Hadzhi Dimov and Dimitŭr Mirazchiev After Ilinden

Directive for the Future Activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (1904)²¹

- I. The uprising should not be preordained and imposed by individuals — it should be dictated mainly by the internal conditions of the Organisation's development.
- II. In future, without fixing the date of the uprising, it is necessary to consolidate and reinforce the Organisation.
- III. However, this does not exclude the carrying out of terrorist actions by the Organisation with the aim of demonstrating its power, or of establishing a link between past and future, or finally of steeling its militants in the revolutionary struggle.

Work towards the consolidation and reinforcement of the Organisation should be understood in the following way: by following the example of the better revolutionary districts before the uprising, by working in the spirit of the 1902 statutes and regulations of the Organisation,²² and by laying stress on the following:

21. The 'Directive' is taken from the second part of Dimov's article 'Dve techeniya' ('Two Currents'), *Revolyucionen List* (*The Revolutionary Journal*), no 8, 27 January 1905. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković. The article was published under the pseudonym *Auzanov*. Dimitŭr Mirazchiev was a socialist (ex-Narrow) and member of IMRO left, co-editor with Dimov of *Konstitucionna Zarya* (*Constitutional Dawn*, 1908), the paper of Sandanaky's Seres IMRO group, and founder of the People's Federative Party (Bulgarian Section) after the Young Turk revolution.
22. The 1902 statutes, reflecting the influence of the IMRO left, sought to transform IMRO from a purely Bulgarian nationalist organisation into one that aimed 'to unite in one whole all dis-

1. Agitation should, as far as possible, be uniform in all districts.
2. The population should not be deceived into thinking that Bulgaria or any other state is going to come and liberate it, but should be taught to rely on its own organised forces, the forces of the oppressed.
3. The Organisation must never shun, but always strive in future to enlist the elements dissatisfied with the existing regime from the other, non-Bulgarian nationalities living on its territory.
4. Agitation should not be seen as a formality, but as the only means of developing conscious revolutionary militants.
5. Such militants should exist in every town and village in groups of between five and seven which make up the nucleus of the Organisation in these places.
6. Every town and village should have its own militia made up of people with good military training, capable of defending the population and providing assistance to other groups if need be.
7. Weapons should only be given to tried and tested militants, and as a reward for their activity, and not randomly as before.
8. Greater emphasis should be placed on the institutions of the village court and of village self-government, so that their centre of gravity is transferred to the population itself.
9. The Organisation's centre of gravity should also be transferred to the masses: the guerrilla bands should act as instructors and inspectors, but should not, as was the case almost everywhere, be all-powerful in the districts so that their disappearance leads to conflict and disorder in the districts.
10. The remaining guerrilla bands that have degenerated into banditry should finally be eliminated once and for all.
11. The militants should be kept better informed, at least with respect to the most vital issues for the Organisation.
12. Revolutionary literature should be produced to educate the militants and strengthen them in the struggle.

Instructions

Agitation: Agitation ought to be identical in broad outline throughout Macedonia and Thrace,²³ but may in its details be adapted to local conditions.

In general the aim of agitation is to explain to the masses the situation in which they find themselves today. The existing order in the country is not based on the interests of the masses who live there, but on the subjugation of the Christians by Muslim conquerors. It is an order that privileges one nationality at the expense of the others. The people's well-being has never been the concern of the Turkish state. The taxes paid by the Christian population are a kind of

contented elements in Macedonia and Thrace, irrespective of nationality, to win full political autonomy for these two provinces through revolution'.

23. Ottoman Thrace (the vilayet of Adrianople) lay at the south-easternmost extremity of the Balkans. It is now divided between European Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria.

permanent indemnity — not even a fraction of these taxes is spent on their welfare. The roads are built with forced labour, but only for the benefit of the ruling nation. The tax system, especially the tithe, is especially ruinous, and has long been done away with in other countries. The people's education is not only neglected, but even hindered when the population takes on this responsibility because it is in the interests of the conquerors that the conquered remain in a state of ignorance. The rôle of the army is less to guard the state from external enemies than to hold down the *raya*.²⁴ The rôle of the courts and administration is not to administer justice and maintain order, but to serve the ruling nationality and to terrorise the *raya*. The lives of the latter are constantly endangered by the very people who are supposed to protect them. Human rights and dignity have no meaning for the Macedonian Christians. Their very existence is considered a favour bestowed by the rulers. Otherwise they are everywhere the object of abuse and humiliation. Family honour and family home are empty words, and are at the mercy of the Turks. Religion, customs and morality are mere sport to the Turk; they are neither controlled, nor protected. Any concern for the health of the people — one of the conditions for its progress — is out of the question in Macedonia and Thrace. The people there are not cattle to be taken care of by their owner, for they are lower than cattle.

Apart from enlightening the masses as to their condition, the rôle of agitation is to convince them that this condition is transitory, and that with its removal new and better conditions for life will emerge, but that this requires a long, adept and organised struggle.

A future democratic order based on the equality of all the nationalities, including the Turks, is the ideal that should be conveyed to the population in the course of agitation.

The agitation must not fail to apprise the fighters of the international position of the Macedonian Question and to teach them to renounce all hopes in Russia, Austria, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. Instead, they must be taught to rely on their own forces and remember that freedom is not something given out of kindness, but must be won arms in hand, and that the greater their own forces, the sooner it will be achieved. The agitation ought to take this form, not only because of the international position of the Macedonian Question, but also in order to prepare the population to take control of its own fate after liberation. A people with freedom on paper is not really free. This can easily be suppressed and replaced by the arbitrary rule of the oppressors of the people. Only a people that conquers its own freedom, for which freedom becomes a tradition passed down from generation to generation, is truly free.

Leading Groups: A revolutionary organisation develops correctly when its leadership emerges from its ranks. Such an organisation is artificial if its leadership comes from the outside. In the latter case, it is impossible to avoid a forced and superficial understanding of the direction and goals of the organisation.

24. A generic term for the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire used by their Muslim overlords. It derives from the Arabic word for herd or flock of animals.

Revolutions are the product of real conditions; they are not something accidental cooked up by individuals. Their pioneers always come from the intelligentsia, which is able to grasp the situation quicker and come to a better understanding of it. However, these pioneers never make the actual revolution themselves. They appear as the apostles of the new social conditions, and their activity is predominantly intellectual and exemplary in character. Revolutions are carried out *in fact* by the popular masses, and our Organisation will not be revolutionary unless it forms revolutionary elements from among these masses. As a rule, we should begin with small steps and later gradually move onto to a broader, national plane. We should proceed from the better-educated and public-spirited elements in the towns and villages that are capable of more rapidly and more fully grasping the situation and drawing the necessary conclusions. In every town and village, these elements should form the embryo of leading groups which, as they gradually expand, will encompass all the conscious elements of the masses.

There is nothing worse than a revolutionary movement that is artificial, but, at the same time, there is nothing more difficult than the creation of conscious revolutionary forces within the peasant masses. The village accepts change with difficulty. It is easy to rouse the peasant to revolt in view of his oppressed position in Turkey, but to make the movement systematic and conscious is a difficult task. However, considering that this population is being prepared not only to win rights, but also to preserve and enjoy them, it is necessary to overcome this difficulty and move slowly but surely toward the awakening of a political consciousness that will bring about the genuine destruction of tyranny. It is extremely difficult to turn the Macedonian slave in so short a time into a conscious citizen. Nevertheless, the aim of establishing groups from among the slaves that understand the real situation, know their rights, and can at the same time serve as the leaders of the masses around them is not illusory. It is in fact a sure means for the Organisation to become an organisation of the people, and to become authentic, healthy and invincible.

The military and legal leadership should strive to create such leading groups, as it is only in these that the Organisation will find a healthy base for all of its activities.

The leading groups are the only forces in town and village that by word and deed can revolutionise the masses. The leading groups come from the masses, live with their hopes and ideals, are rooted in them and have identical interests. Therefore their chances of success are incomparably higher than those of a guerrilla fighter or a passing agitator.

The International Basis of the Organisation: The population of Macedonia and Thrace is ethnically mixed. There the revolutionary is not faced with a homogeneous mass, and his task is very complicated. It is made even more complex by the national rivalries that have been sown in this region over the centuries. Above all, he must eliminate or weaken these rivalries. The common ground that encourages rapprochement between the nationalities is, on the one hand, the brutal slavery that hinders the normal development of all the nationalities, and, on the other, the future political life of Macedonia, which will be based on representative government, and will prepare the conditions for a Bal-

kan federation. These two structures will together be able to guarantee the rights of all the nationalities living on the Organisation's territory.

The nationalist struggle, supported and fanned by the neighbouring states, is the main cause of the discord that eats away at the country. Revolutionaries must make clear to the population the harmful consequences of these struggles for it, and the interest of Turkey in keeping them going in order to continue its rule unhindered. If revolutionary propaganda is to have value, revolutionaries must rid themselves of nationalist errors, they must be honest. The representatives of the Organisation abroad must follow the same path and avoid any action that would raise even a suspicion of nationalism, or stoke chauvinist fires.

If the agitation is to be fruitful, it must be bolstered by facts which allow of no room for doubt. Thus the governing bodies of the organisation must be opened up to capable and promising persons from the various nationalities and the guerrilla bands must admit good revolutionaries, regardless of nationality. In general, the administrative structure of the Organisation should be the model for any future representative government. The Organisation should not abandon the ground of equality, and should protect all dissatisfied elements, irrespective of nationality, from any violation of their rights, whatever its origin.

The Bringing Together of the Nationalities into One Political Unit: The goal of the Revolutionary Organisation requires not only the awakening of the popular masses and their political consciousness, but also the bringing together of its various national elements into one political unit that would see its salvation and future progress in the independence of Macedonia and Thrace.

It is necessary to make the population understand the international position of the Macedonian Question, which, together with the distribution of nationalities in the country, does not permit the realisation of any state idea based on partition and annexation.

It is necessary to expose the greedy aspirations of the neighbouring states to break off parts of Macedonia and Thrace, informed not by humanitarian or brotherly concerns, but by state egoism.

The idea of the *Balkan federation* must lay at the basis of rapprochement and must become powerful enough to unpose itself on the neighbouring states as the only means of salvation for them all. Macedonia and Thrace, as an independent member in this federation, will serve as a point of convergence for the interests of all the members of the federation.

The main task of our Organisation is not to provoke an uprising artificially, but to educate the population for freedom and lead it in the struggle to win the rights that freedom demands. The essence of the struggle that the Organisation has been waging and continues to wage against the nationalists both at home and abroad amounts to the following — whether it will remain a *revolutionary* organisation in the full sense of the word, and so proceed slowly but surely towards its goal — the independence of Macedonia and Thrace as a distinct political unit in the future Balkan federation — or evolve into a *renegade terrorist* organisation that is instrumental in the partition of our fatherland and in realising the *greater nationalist* ideas of the neighbouring states.

Dimitŭr Blagoev

On the Macedonian Question²⁵

FROM everything that has been written up to now in the pages of our review, it is clear that our attitude, that is, the attitude of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Labour Party toward the policy of the bourgeois parties of the Balkan states with regard to Macedonia cannot be anything but negative. This policy is first of all consistently harmful for the working class of Bulgaria; it is a policy that erects enormous barriers to the socio-political development of the country, as well as being exceptionally harmful to the Macedonian population itself. This general attitude on our part towards the policy of our bourgeois parties and coteries with regard to the 'Macedonian Question' also determines our attitude to the two Macedonian-Thracian²⁶ organisations, the so-called 'Supremacists' and the Centralists, that is, the Internal Macedonian-Thracian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO). Let me explain!

Both Macedonian-Thracian organisations have one and the same goal — the liberation of Macedonia and Thrace and their unification with the principality. In this sense, both of them are nationalist. However, they are sharply distinguished by the means and methods by which they want to attain this goal. The Supremacists think to attain this goal through a guerrilla incursion from Bulgaria into Macedonia, and by setting off in this way an uprising that will provoke a military conflict between Turkey and Bulgaria that will compel the latter to invade Macedonia. IMRO, by contrast, thinks that the goal will be attained through a revolution for which the population in Macedonia should be prepared through long revolutionary activity. From the point of view of IMRO, the greatest enemy of its revolutionary cause is the activity of the Supremacists. In a circular letter published in the newspaper *Reformi*,²⁷ the organ of the Supremacists, a letter issued, according to the assurances of this newspaper, by Sandansky, one of the most eminent IMRO activists in Macedonia, after speaking of the danger that the Supremacist guerrillas, dispatched from Bulgaria, and the Greek and Serbian guerrillas sent from Greece and Serbia, pose for IMRO, it says amongst other things:

25. From *Novo Vreme*, June 1905. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Žuković. Blagoev's article was published unsigned. *Novo Vreme* (New Times, 1897-1923) was theoretical review of the Narrows and after 1919 of the Bulgarian Communist Party (which the Narrows became).

26. Ottoman Thrace (*sâkay* of Adrianople) lay at the south-easternmost extremity of the Balkans. It is now divided between European Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria.

27. *Reformi* (1899-1905) was the paper, first of the Supreme Macedonian-Thracian Committee in Bulgaria, and then, after its dissolution by the Bulgarian government in March 1903, of its Supremacist leadership.

The Organisation²⁸ is one and indivisible, it cannot allow the existence of other bodies in Macedonia with aims similar to its own, and it will always hunt them down. Anyone who wants to fight for the ideal of 'Macedonia for the Macedonians' cannot but join the Organisation, since this ideal is also its basic principle, and all those others who in their activity are inspired by chauvinistic ideals are its enemies, and will be treated in the same fashion as all its enemies.

The Committee hopes that you comrades will also fully share our beliefs, are also conscious of the dangers, and will not hesitate to lead a struggle against guerrillas foreign to the Organisation, against all of its enemies. Do not accept any new guerrillas until they have presented you with credentials from us — the Regional Committee — or unless it can be verified that they have been sent by the Organisation, and report their appearance immediately to the appropriate committees. If you can, try to wipe them out or drive them out of your villages or districts. You will receive from us every possible cooperation and assistance. Yes, comrades, the danger is indeed great, and our very duty is vigilantly to follow even the most insignificant actions of the enemy, always to be on the alert and to nip in the bud all evil, otherwise afterwards it will be too late, much too late.

We read the same thing in the 'Official Supplement' of the organ of IMRO, *Revolyutsionen List*,²⁹ published on 2 June of this year in Sofia:

The Supremacists await orders from Sofia, but in Sofia they can never know what the local conditions in which we have to operate are like at any given moment. IMRO is independent and autonomous, but the Supremacists — and by now nobody apart from them denies this — find themselves under the influence of the Bulgarian governments, and often these governments use them to exploit the cause of liberation for their own state, party or personal interests. Finally, in contrast with that complex and varied strategy employed by the Organisation in its struggle against every manifestation of Turkish tyranny, the Supremacists know of only one method — a *revolt* artificially provoked from within Bulgaria. No intelligent person today still thinks that Macedonia can be liberated by such an artificial movement, incited and maintained from *without*; the latter would only earn Bulgaria a war with Turkey, or with some of the neighbouring states, but never freedom for Macedonia.

The words we have just quoted are absolutely correct. The manner in which the

28. That is, IMRO.

29. *The Revolutionary Journal* (1904-06) was the paper of the left wing of IMRO. Dimo Hadzhu Dimov was appointed its editor by IMRO's Rila Congress of October 1905. Some writers have attributed the authorship of the 'Official Supplement' to Dimov.

her, but also can only cause harm to both Bulgaria and Macedonia. Dispatching guerrillas from Bulgaria into Macedonia can only serve the exploitation of the 'Macedonian Question' by our bourgeois parties and coteries on behalf of 'state' and partisan goals, and in general all personal regimes.³⁰ Today it is obvious that the 'Macedonian Question' plays the same rôle in the hands of the present government as it played in that of the National Party government during 1895.³¹ If in those days guerrilla invasions from Bulgaria into Macedonia served to reconcile Turkey and Russia with Bulgaria, then today such invasions by Supremacist guerrillas into Macedonia serve to reconcile Turkey and Bulgaria on the basis of the 'King's crown', that is, Bulgaria's proclamation as an independent kingdom.³²

It is true that the Supremacists energetically reject this outcome to the struggle. For example, *Reformi* of 9 April, having demonstrated the untimeliness and harmfulness of such ambitions for Bulgaria and Macedonia, concludes: 'The King's crown, amidst the still burning Macedonian houses and amidst the laments of the mothers and children of Macedonia, can be nothing but the herald of dangerous currents, of catastrophes and calamities.' However much we consider such declarations to be sincere, the Supremacist tactic nevertheless unavoidably leads to the exploitation of the Macedonian Question for party and state interests. The present dispatching of Supremacist guerrillas can only result in catastrophe and calamity, above all for Bulgaria, which will perhaps gain the 'King's Crown', but nothing more; that is, it will only serve to effect bargains with Turkey for the attainment of independent Kingdom status for Bulgaria. A little earlier in the same article in *Reformi* there is indignation at the Bulgarian government, since it 'especially in the last few years... has not ceased to employ the "Macedonian Question" whether for the ministers' personal interests or party interests and interests directly contrary to the ideals for which the Macedonians have given so much blood'. This is why the government does not cease to strive to 'establish artificial currents in the Macedonian organisations' and to support 'intrigues in Macedonian circles aimed at paralysing the natural development of the Macedonian movement'. All this is quite correct. However, the strategy of the Supremacists is such that they, without wanting to, and perhaps without even realising it, serve the interests of the Bulgarian government.

In reality, the sympathies of bourgeois society in Bulgaria are clearly divided

30. Blagoev is presumably referring to the personal regime of Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1861-1948, reigned 1887-1918), Prince of Bulgaria, who by the late 1890s ran its foreign policy, appointed successive governments, and had the final say in domestic policy.

31. The foreign policy of Prime Minister Konstantin Stoulov (1853-1901, in office 1894-1899) and his National Party government sought, on the one hand, reconciliation with Russia and the latter's recognition of Ferdinand as Prince of Bulgaria, and, on the other, to exploit what appeared to be the approaching end of the Ottoman Empire. To provoke Great Power intervention against Turkey, the Supremacists were encouraged to launch an uprising in Macedonia. Bulgaria could then also appear as the 'guardian of order' in Macedonia and force Russia to recognise Ferdinand. The subsequent 'Melnik adventure' of 1895 led not to European intervention, but to terrible Turkish reprisals against the local population.

32. Although Bulgaria was almost completely independent *de facto*, it remained by the terms of the Treaty of Berlin an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire.

In reality, the sympathies of bourgeois society in Bulgaria are clearly divided between the two Macedonian-Thracian organisations. Without doubt, the Supremacists mainly enjoy the sympathy of the upper military and civil circles. IMRO, by contrast, enjoys the sympathy of the wide mass of bourgeois society and of its political representatives, parties and coteries. This division of bourgeois sympathies is explained by their different attitudes to 'the national task'. The upper circles of bourgeois society consider Macedonia and Thrace to be Bulgarian *lost court*, and that they should, at a favourable point in time, be forcibly annexed to Bulgaria. They have nothing to lose from such an action if it leads to an ill-fated war. The remaining part of bourgeois society, especially the petit-bourgeoisie and part of the middling bourgeoisie, fears a disastrous war that would doubtless ruin it economically, and so sympathises with the kind of solution to the 'national task' that does not disturb its position in society. For this reason, it cannot but sympathise with IMRO, whose activity takes place far away from Bulgaria. This is all the more so since the road by which IMRO hopes to resolve 'the national task' presents many sympathetic sides. And indeed a brief look at this organisation will confirm our opinion. In the 'Official Supplement to *Revolutionen List*' we find the following:

IMRO is not an accidental or a passing phenomenon. It would be a curious mistake to think that it is the fruit of some external agitation. There is nothing manufactured about it; it is the natural and necessary product of the bloody Turkish regime that is distinguished by purely medieval relations and indescribable economic chaos, its monarchical absolutism, vandalism and anarchy. The organised efforts of the *raya*, that is, socially oppressed and economically exploited, for a more humane life — this is IMRO. The Organisation must set as its most important tasks:

I. While educating the population in a revolutionary spirit, it should prepare it for a serious and long-term struggle so that it can win freedom for itself by its own hand.

II. To defend the population, to provide it with a more tolerable life even during the period of the liberation struggle. It should at the same time defend it from the arbitrary acts of the administration, and from the corruption, injustice and the vindictiveness of the courts, from the misdeeds of certain bodies and individuals. This is why, repudiating Turkish rule, it organises its own administration and courts that have neither drawn-out nor useless formalities, nor bribes, nor any interest in violating justice. Through its special organs it should undertake to look after the division of those taxes levied by the local council in proportion to the means of each family. It should begin to make sure that one and the same tax is not collected several times.³³ It should undertake to pursue

33. The peasant tithe was collected by tax-farmers determined to squeeze the maximum from their 'concessions' from the state. The dues of landless peasants to their absentee Turkish lords were collected by stewards amidst indescribable abuses and corruption.

a kind of peasant militia with which to pursue and destroy criminal gangs and individual ne'er-do-wells and wrongdoers. Through strikes it should begin to oppose the shameless exploitation of labour, and so on.

And so little by little it not only penetrates everywhere, but is also all-encompassing; it becomes the real master in its territory and attains all the attributes of a legal government — it becomes a state within a state.

III. In addition to this, it sets itself another, no less important, task. It should not only educate and prepare the conscious revolutionary forces that are necessary to lead the liberation struggle successfully, it should also educate the whole population to live in freedom. We know that it is often much easier for a people to win its freedom than to enjoy and defend it; history is full of such examples. It should prepare the peasants for local self-government. While educating revolutionaries, it should simultaneously be educating future citizens.

To achieve these tasks, IMRO has set itself the goal of '*political autonomy*' in which 'all the nationalities in the country would be equal'. Thus, it has adopted the principle proclaimed by Gladstone: '*Macedonia for the Macedonians*'.³⁴ In accordance with its tasks and its ultimate goal, IMRO is *revolutionary* and not *nationalist*, and in its internal structure it rejects over-centralisation:

It cannot be in the interest of the cause of liberation for the population, which is struggling against tyranny and is preparing one day to govern itself, to be subjected to a new tyranny. This is why even from very early on the electoral principle should begin to be implemented everywhere; institutions should be placed above individuals; districts should become semi-autonomous; and the general congress of all the district representatives should become the law-making body of the Organisation, its parliament. The present internal administration of the Organisation is in short a kind of *outline*, if I can express myself thus, of the future representative government of the country.

It is natural that the centre of the organisation should lie in the interior, 'in its territory', so that it is harder for it to fall under foreign influences. We read on the same page:

Finally, the Organisation which has its own *internal policy* — definite attitudes towards all internal forces, church and educational institutions, nationalist propaganda, the government, the Turkish committees and so on — should also have its own precisely determined *foreign policy* towards all

34. William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1908) was the British Prime Minister (1868-74, 1880-85, 1886, 1892-94) and Liberal statesman. He denounced Turkish massacres in the wake of the April Rising of 1876 in Bulgaria, attacked the pro-Turkish policy of the Conservative government, and called for autonomous self-government for the Christian populations of Turkey.

the neighbouring states. It is known that the latter have important politico-economic interests in Macedonia; this is why each of them strives to take into its hands or exploit all the forces in the country, in first place, of course, the most important and the most powerful force — the Organisation. This is why the latter has struggled and continues to struggle constantly to protect itself from any kind of external interference and influence so as not to become the vehicle of some foreign interest. It should be completely autonomous and independent.

I have quoted quite a lot from IMRO's 'Official Supplement' to acquaint the reader with the basic principles of this organisation and its structure. From the material cited, the reader can see for himself that IMRO really has many sympathetic aspects. Firstly, it really is a revolutionary organisation that rests on the masses inside Macedonia, and organises them for self-defence, self-government, and for the struggle for a better future. This fact alone is sufficient for us to state categorically what our attitude should be towards IMRO. If our attitude to the tactics of the Supremacists is completely to reject them, for the reasons stated above, then we can only look sympathetically on IMRO. Of course, it is another matter whether, following the uprising in Bitola³⁵ and with the present state of the Macedonian Question, the latter will be capable of continuing to carrying out such tasks as it has accomplished, and is now undertaking, and achieve its goal. Here, we can only express certain thoughts and proposals on this matter.

IMRO is today undergoing a great crisis. The blows of many of its enemies are directed at it. The influence that it exercises over the population within Macedonia, the power that it showed in the uprising in Bitola, and the determined and terrible bombings in Salonika³⁶ — all this has roused up in addition to Turkey, European democracy, Serbia and Greece. It must today defend itself from the 'Turkish army and Turkish gendarmes under the leadership of the 'reformers',³⁷ from Greek and Serbian guerrillas, whose aim is the destruction of IMRO and the extermination of the Bulgarian population. Such furious attacks on IMRO from so many different sides are very easy to explain. IMRO constantly repeats that it is not nationalist, and that its motto is the principle '*Macedonia for the Macedonians*'. By this it means that it will accept into its ranks everyone, regardless of nationality, that it defends all the nationalities in its region, and that it is fighting for the freedom of the whole population of Macedonia and Thrace, regardless of nationality. However, such declarations obviously fail to convince

35. Blagoev is referring to the Ilinden Uprising, which was concentrated in the Ottoman *vilayet* (administrative district) of Bitola (today an area split between the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece).

36. These were in fact carried out in April 1903 by a group of Macedonian-Bulgarian anarchists, the *Gemazhii* (Sailors), who were loosely connected with IMRO.

37. As part of the Mürtzsteg reforms, imposed by Russia and Austria-Hungary after the Ilinden uprising, a foreign general and officers were to reorganise the brutal, corrupt and semi-bandit Turkish 'police force', without however being in command of them. However, these reforms were largely abortive.

its opponents. It is obvious to the Greek and Serbian bourgeoisie, to Turkey and to Europe that IMRO is *nationalistic*, that it is a purely Bulgarian affair. For them the motto '*Macedonia for the Macedonians*' signifies above all 'Macedonia for the Bulgarians', that gives freedom and the same rights to all the nationalities in it as at present in Bulgaria. And we should not hide this, as there is nothing to be gained by it.

There is an element of truth to these suspicions on the part of the Greek and Serbian bourgeoisie, of Turkey and of Europe. First of all, there are many in IMRO who are at heart pure nationalists and who regard the Organisation itself as having purely nationalist tasks and aims. Such private thoughts can be expressed as follows. The core of Macedonia are the three *vilayets*³⁸ and Thrace, but there the Bulgarian population constitutes the great majority in relation to all the nationalities taken separately. Therefore 'Macedonia is ours' and it should unite with us Bulgarians from free Bulgaria. But the position of Macedonia on the Balkan Peninsula is such that Bulgaria cannot achieve national unification simply by declaring war on Turkey. For this it is necessary to have a well-organised general uprising in Macedonia and Thrace to provoke the intervention of Europe and Bulgaria in favour of the independence of these *vilayets* from the Turkish Empire. And an autonomous Macedonia in which the ruling element is Bulgarian would also ensure unification with Bulgaria in the not-too-distant future. Such are the private thoughts of many of the members of IMRO. Indirect proof of this can be found in the 'Official Supplement' when, talking about the nature of the Supremacists, it says:

Thus, on the one hand, the Organisation struggles not for some national privileges, and not for the territorial expansion of Bulgaria, but holds the banner of the liberation struggle high above all religious and national aims. On the other hand, the Supremacists, with their narrow-minded and pig-headed nationalism, without taking into account the international status of the Macedonian Question, strive by all means and in everything they do to represent the liberation struggle to the outside world as purely Bulgarian. In this way, they both compromise the cause and inflict great damage on it.

In this passage we find concealed the unspoken views of many IMRO supporters which we have been discussing that boil down to the motto: 'Given the present status of Macedonia on the Balkan peninsula — for now an autonomous Macedonia, but later on unification with Bulgaria.' Only a minority within it have completely abandoned nationalist views in relation to the 'Macedonian Question'. It is precisely because of this that the Greek and Serbian bourgeoisie, Turkey and Europe are suspicious of the organisation, and this is the main cause of the bloodthirsty guerrilla raids that they are launching against it today. And there is no doubt that these raids weaken IMRO. Today, it is obliged to think only of

38. Vilayets were administrative districts of the Ottoman Empire

its own self-preservation. But, in addition to this, it also finds itself under attack from the Supremacists, which also weakens it. To cap it all, the Organisation is also threatened by the intrigues of the Bulgarian government, and of its agents. The agents of the government conduct their intrigues very skilfully between these two contending organisations by exploiting the patriotism of the Macedonian activists and the high-standing of some of them in Bulgaria. In any case, IMRO, which strives to become autonomous and independent of the influence of Bulgarian governments, will only ever provoke feelings of ill-will and a desire to sabotage it on the part of these agents.

But the greatest attack on IMRO comes from the 'process of reform'.³⁹ As these reforms spread, the Organisation will no longer be tolerated as a state within a state, and will also find that the tasks it sets itself have been superseded. In this way, the 'process of reform' undermines and will continue to undermine the basis of the organisation. It will either be compelled to declare its mission accomplished, or it will have to reorganise itself on completely new principles. In that case, it will have to make a decisive break with the nationalist spirit which pervades many of its members and re-establish itself on the principles of contemporary revolutionary internationalism, not on the principle of simply accepting members from all the nationalities who happen to agree with it. If it turns out to be incapable of doing this, it will sooner or later disappear, to be replaced by a new revolutionary organisation.

IMRO has until now concentrated and continues to concentrate its activity on the villages with the aim, obviously, of preparing a peasant revolution. However, history and the experience of the uprising in Macedonia and Thrace show that today a peasant revolution cannot achieve the goals it sets itself. A peasant revolution can only serve the revolutionary cause when it comes to the aid of revolution in the cities, especially the important urban centres. When we take into account the new situation faced by the Organisation as a result of the 'process of reform' in Macedonia — a situation that it itself acknowledges — resulting in the inevitable decline of the Organisation's significance, we come to the conclusion that the centre of revolutionary activity in Macedonia should shift to the towns, and especially to the urban centres, such as Bitola,⁴⁰ Skopje, Salonika, Dedeağatch,⁴¹ Adrianople⁴² and so on. This does not mean that the villages should be abandoned once and for all. No, the position occupied by the Organisation in the villages must be defended. But the new situation in Macedonia dictates that intensive revolutionary activity should be undertaken in the towns.

However, moving the centre of revolutionary activity to the towns imposes not only new revolutionary tactics, but also new views and principles from

39. Blagoev is referring again to the Murtasteg reforms.

40. Today a city in the south of the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) close to the border with Greece.

41. A North Aegean port in Ottoman Thrace, today Alexandroupoli in modern Greece.

42. The regional capital of Ottoman Thrace, now Edirne, the westernmost city of the European tip of Turkey.

which these tactics flow. Above all, the labouring masses should be organised in the cities without distinction of nationality or creed as they pass from the economic into the political struggle. This is why it is necessary to conduct *socialist agitation and propaganda* amongst the masses. They can only be organised and inspired with *revolutionary enthusiasm* in this way. Only an organised workers' movement in the big cities of Macedonia and Thrace, one which fights for the final goal of socialism and for the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, can establish a movement for political freedom in Macedonia among the shopkeepers, merchants and industrialists, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie.

But independently of this, the establishment of revolutionary activity in Macedonia on the principles of international revolutionary Social Democracy will immediately place the revolutionary cause firmly on the ground of genuine, contemporary internationalism, and will remove any suspicion that it has nationalist aspirations, or that it is a *purely Bulgarian affair*. The slogan of 'Macedonia for the Macedonians' is absolutely incapable of achieving this. The most pernicious aims can lurk behind this slogan, and it cannot eradicate the nationalist struggles, nor can it attract the sympathies of revolutionary forces in other countries that are essential for any revolutionary cause, especially for that within Macedonia and the Turkish Empire as a whole. And if IMRO broadens thus its views, its principles, its tactics and its internal structure — and this is already dictated by the special position of Macedonia and Thrace on the Balkan peninsula, and the new situation brought about by the interference of European diplomacy in the administration of Turkey — it will not only have our sympathies, but also the assistance of Social Democracy in Bulgaria, in Serbia, and in Greece (if and when it appears there), and in general of the whole of international Social Democracy whose influence on the political life of nations grows by leaps and bounds. Then our comrades who go over to Macedonia or who live and work there permanently will not only enter its ranks and work under its direction, but will also become its best activists.

But will the present IMRO understand the necessity of such a broadening of its views, principles and tactics? Reality itself will push it in this direction, but whether or not it goes all the way also depends a great deal on us. We should not act in a hostile fashion towards it. I would go even further: our comrades who go to Macedonia, or who live and work there permanently, can enter its ranks, and, having completely and sincerely submitted to its authority, strive through its statutory channels and by participating in its congresses and deliberations to introduce into it the new elements mentioned above.

A Gorov

Once Again on the Macedonian Question⁴³

I

UNTIL now our party has not had a formal position, that is, of the kind determined by a party congress, towards the Macedonian movement, but there have nevertheless been certain *de facto* positions — we have related one way or another at certain times towards this movement. The history of these *de facto* positions of ours towards the Macedonian movement is to a great degree the history of our party: at a certain period of development of our party our attitudes were of one kind, and these began to change with the onset of another period.

At the time when our party had nothing to do with the industrial proletariat in Bulgaria, when it consisted almost exclusively of intellectuals and petty proprietors, and only to a certain degree of craft workers, for which the objective conditions were lacking to enable them to break more quickly with petit-bourgeois ideology, in other words, when our party was not '*the party of the proletariat*', even though it was '*proletarian*' in its theory — at this time it was as a whole going rapidly downhill, and it did not follow a proletarian tactic since the objective conditions for this did not exist, given the lack of an industrial proletariat inside or outside the party. The layer of intellectuals with which the party was predominantly filled, since it could not find a proletarian milieu where it could put its convictions into practice — and it passionately desired to work for the socialist cause — went off into milieus quite foreign to the proletariat. It participated in the awakening of the peasant masses in the so-called agrarian movement, in the teachers' movement, and at the same time it most actively participated in the Macedonian movement.

However today, when the party, even though it has not completely turned its back on its first period, is showing signs of already embarking on another period of its development, it is on the way to transforming itself from a '*proletarian*' party in its theory into a '*party of the proletariat*'. Today, our party is abandoning the old non-proletarian tactic. The social democratic intellectuals are withdrawing from movements alien to the proletariat, and the same is taking place with those participating in the Macedonian movement. However, let us see what our participation in the Macedonian movement is all about.

The Macedonian movement can be examined from two sides: the movement

43. From *Novi Vrem*, November 1905. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živkovski.

of immigrants in Bulgaria, expressed in the many Macedonian societies with their executive body, the 'Supreme Macedonian-Thracian Committee', the movement known by its later name of the 'Supremacists', and secondly the movement of the Macedonian population inside Macedonia itself, expressed through the so-called 'Internal Organisation (IMRO)'. Our comrades who until now participated in the Macedonian movement were guided by the idea that we could influence this movement and drive it onto the right path. We proceeded on the basis that the Macedonian movement could be directed by social democrats, and, moreover, that it could become purely social democratic — this was considered to be especially true of the movement within Macedonia, that is, of 'IMRO'. Our participation in the 'Supremacist' movement began in 1901 when Sarafov's⁴⁴ Supreme Committee was arrested by the government in Sofia.⁴⁵ Our comrades, especially those from the provinces, considered it necessary to rush to the aid of the liberation movement in Bulgaria. They actively participated in the work of the Macedonian movement of that time, and as a result at the Macedonian Congress in Sofia, Vladimir Dimitrov, then a socialist and now a promoter of the 'Common Cause', was elected to the Supreme Committee as its Vice-President.⁴⁶ Comrade N Harlakov was assigned to the editorship of the paper, *Reformi*, which was then and now the voice of the Supreme Committee.⁴⁷ It should be noted that at that time not a single voice was raised within the party against the participation of these eminent party members in the Supreme Committee, which is why there can be no question of individuals making 'common cause' with the bourgeoisie. V Dimitrov and comrade Harlakov had the whole party behind them; and the party, even though it made no official declarations, was in solidarity with their actions.

But this mistake was easily remedied. Very shortly thereafter we withdrew from the Macedonian movement in Bulgaria. Nor could it be otherwise. The activity of the Supreme Committee as the tool of various governments and of the Macedonian immigrant community which supported the most reactionary

44. Boris Sarafov (1872-1907) was a Macedonian-born officer in the Bulgarian army and president of the Supreme Committee (1899-1901). An unscrupulous adventurer, often swapping IMRO and Supremacist loyalties, he was assassinated by an agent of the IMRO left.
45. In 1900, Stefan Mihailescu, an anti-IMRO Macedonian Vlach publicist, was assassinated in Bucharest, allegedly on the orders of Sarafov, bringing Bulgaria and Romania to the brink of war, and leading to the arrest of the whole Supreme Committee.
46. Vladimir Dimitrov was a lawyer, and was elected to the Supreme Committee as part of the pro-IMRO faction at the Eighth Macedonian Congress of 4-7 April 1901. After the split in the BRSDP, he joined the Broads who were also known as *Obshchakli* because they believed that, in a backward country with a small proletariat, socialists had to make 'common cause' with the advanced bourgeoisie to achieve the progressive reforms necessary for the growth of the socialist movement.
47. Nikola Harlakov (1874-1927) was a Bulgarian socialist leader and publicist, and in 1902-03, Secretary of the Central Committee. He sided with the Narrows in the 1903 split, and in 1903-05 was Secretary and Treasurer of the Narrow BRSDP. He led a split from the Narrows in 1905, which unified with the Broads in 1908, and was a leading ideologist of the IMRO Left after the Young Turk Revolution. In 1917, he left the Broads, joined the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1921, and was involved in negotiations that led to the abortive alliance between the Comintern and IMRO of 1924.

regimes in Bulgaria — all this came to convince us that we could not lead a petit-bourgeois movement, and that we had no place there. The massive participation of our comrades from the provinces in the Macedonian movement in 1901 could not but bring itself to the attention of our party writers, and so our party papers began to comment on it. Comrade G Georgiev⁴⁸ wrote the article 'The Macedonian Movement' for issue 4 of *Novo Vreme* for 1901, in which he pointed out very clearly the nature of this movement in Bulgaria, but in the end concluded with an unconvincing and hesitant thought: he called for the withdrawal of the labouring masses in Bulgaria from this movement, but nevertheless conceded that our comrades could lend 'much greater support' to the Macedonian cause. In the review of events in the next issue of *Novo Vreme*, comrade Senex,⁴⁹ after noting the great number of socialist delegates at the extraordinary Macedonian Congress in Sofia at the time, 'despite a circular letter from the Central Committee recommending the party comrades not to get too involved in the Macedonian-Thracian organisation to the detriment of the socialist cause' (my emphasis — A Gorov), pointed out that the party did not have a fixed outlook regarding its attitude to the 'Macedonian-Thracian Organisation', and expressed the wish that this question be placed on the agenda of the forthcoming Pleven congress.

The only article in our socialist press that upheld the opinion that we should systematically participate in the Macedonian movement was the article of Venelin, published in issue 6 of *Novo Vreme*.⁵⁰ Here Venelin declares that we, in general, do not have any cause to run away from the Macedonian-Thracian Organisation in Bulgaria. 'Even if it does not keep on the right track', he continues, 'our duty is to participate in it with redoubled force and give it the direction dictated by the interests of the Macedonian slave, as well as the real interests of the Bulgarian state.' The editors of the journal placed a note before this article in which they resolutely protested against such simultaneous participation in the socialist cause in Bulgaria and in Macedonian affairs: 'The Macedonian organisation consists of so many motley elements, that any participation of our comrades with the aim of influencing its future direction will turn out to be useless.' And later: 'Our comrades will either occupy themselves "with redoubled force" with the socialist cause in Bulgaria or with the revolutionary cause in Macedonia. To preoccupy themselves *simultaneously* [my emphasis — AG] with both causes and "with redoubled force" in each case is an impossible task. In that case, they would accomplish neither one nor the other as they should be.'

48. Gavril Georgiev (1870-1917) was one of the original leaders of the BRSDP and then the Narrows. He was a member of the Central Committee during 1894-1909, and co-editor of the Narrows paper *Rabotnicheska Vestnik* (*The Worker's Paper*, 1897-1939) during 1897, 1900-09.

49. 'Senex' was in fact none other than Dimităr Blagoev. In fact (contra 'Gorov'), his article was published in the same April 1901 issue as that of Georgiev.

50. See 'Makedonskiyat vûpros i rabotnicheskata partiya' ('The Macedonian Question and the Workers' Party'), *Novo Vreme*, no 6, 1901, pp597-604. 'Venelin' was another pseudonym. Some writers have ascribed it to Ivan Dimitrov, a socialist politically close to Danno Hadzhi Dimov, with whom he collaborated in the *Edinstvo* (Unity) Macedonian Society in Dupnitsa (today Stanke Dimitrov) and in the Supreme Macedonian Committee in Bulgaria before its takeover by Bulgarian army officers in 1901-02.

It should be emphasised that our comrades who wrote on this question did so with the aim of deflecting our comrades from a narrow concern with Macedonian affairs, but in general they were not against their participation in the Macedonian cause, but only in so far as such participation was 'to the detriment' of the socialist cause in Bulgaria. Once again in the review of events in the double issue of *Novo Vreme* (no 7-8) of the same year, comrade Senex, in the course of noting the struggle within the ranks of the regular Macedonian Congress, urgently called on our comrades to reflect upon their participation in the Supreme Committee. And finally, even though the party congress in Pleven was not able to concern itself with and establish our attitude towards the Macedonian movement, after everything that was written in *Novo Vreme* and after the articles of comrade Gavril Georgiev in *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*,⁵¹ we can consider a negative attitude towards the Macedonian movement in Bulgaria as established in the party.

However, things stood differently as regards the question of participation in IMRO. We were not able to break so easily from it. From now on, we emerged as its out-and-out defender in its struggle against the Supreme Committee. And precisely here our entire party in the person of those comrades who led this struggle stood, even if not particularly actively, on the side of IMRO.

During 1902, when the Supreme Committee of the Generals — Tsonchev⁵² and Mihailovski,⁵³ the most reliable instruments of the Ministry of War — stood at the head of the Macedonian movement in Bulgaria, when it sought to conquer IMRO with armed guerrilla detachments, we social democrats who were involved in the Macedonian cause were to be found in the ranks of the latter, and in this respect we had the support of the whole party. Comrade Harlakov was also, and for the last time, editing that year the paper, *Delo*,⁵⁴ the organ of IMRO, in which he published a series of articles about the uproar at the time over the Firmilijan Question,⁵⁵ on the Balkan policy of Russia, Italy and, towards the end, some other articles, which shall always remain of value — but of course, none of this justifies his involvement as a social democrat with it. The same year a group of Macedonian comrades gathered together in Sofia and exchanged views on social democratic activity in Macedonia. The predominant opinion among them was for the need to act by entering IMRO, that is, that separate social democratic groups should not be set up. The fruit of this was the appearance of an 'Open Letter', edited by a member of the Central Committee at that time and at

51. See 'Makedonakoto dvizhenie i rabotnicheskata partiya' ('The Macedonian Movement and the Workers' Party'), *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, no 45-47; 6, 13 and 20 July 1901.

52. General Ivan Tsonchev (1859-1908) was a friend of Prince Ferdinand and an enemy of IMRO. Elected vice-president of the Supreme Committee at the Ninth Macedonian Congress in August 1901, he was the real power in the Committee.

53. Stoyan Mihailovski (1856-1927) was a poet, satirist, historian and Tsonchev ally, and was elected President of the Supreme Committee at the Ninth Macedonian Congress.

54. *The Cause* (1901-02).

55. In 1903, Firmilijan, a Serbian bishop (archimandrite), was appointed bishop of the Skopje diocese of the Orthodox Church by the Patriarchate in Constantinople, thus undermining Bulgarian interests in north Macedonia.

present, and signed by the 'Group of Macedonian Social Democrats'. In it was recommended almost everything put forward now by the author of the article 'On the Macedonian Question',⁵⁶ that is, that the present organisations (then and now) should not be abandoned, that we should participate in them, while slightly modifying the organisational system and paying greater attention to organisation in the towns with wage labourers.

In the same year — 1902 — at the height of the struggle between IMRO and the Supreme Committee, the majority of the comrades who participated in various Macedonian societies in the provinces, not knowing which side to take in this struggle, turned to our party leaders in Sofia for advice; from Sofia came back the reply that they should side with IMRO. This attitude of ours towards IMRO continued until the split in the party, and changed decisively following the uprising 'organised' by IMRO in 1903 in the regions of Bitola and Thrace. On the one hand, there was the beginning of a more sober view of the question after the split, and on the other, the uprising of 1903, which unmasked the nature of IMRO; all this induced our Macedonian social democratic comrades to withdraw from IMRO. The majority of them were inspired by the idea that the participation of socialists in IMRO was simply pointless, and that it was necessary to organise our social democratic forces in Macedonia separately and independently. And, finally, during the winter of 1903-04, with the assistance of the Central Committee, a '*Macedonian-Thracian Revolutionary Social Democratic Group of Sofia*' was formed from some 10 or 12 individuals, which set itself the goal of working towards the establishment of social democratic groups in European Turkey that would later unite in one common organisation. In fact, this group has not undertaken any special activity. It can only send a certain quantity of socialist books to Macedonia, and with its assistance it has been possible to set up social democratic groups in two towns in Macedonia. However, for some time now the group in Sofia, for reasons that it is inappropriate to set out here, has been practically non-existent. But this is not the important thing here. I would simply like to emphasise that, after the split and after the uprising, a certain conception of our attitude to IMRO established itself among our Macedonian social democratic comrades and our party leaders — a point of view expressed in the creation of the aforementioned group in Sofia.

And, just when this point of view has been established, the comrade author of the aforementioned article once more advances the old position that it took us so long to get rid of.

II

Now we must examine the character of the present IMRO. But, first, I will make a preliminary observation.

The proletarian class struggle in its historical development has established certain attitudes on the part of the class-conscious proletariat organised in social

56. Blagoev's article was left unsigned.

democratic parties to various bourgeois movements. Revolutionary Social Democracy everywhere relates to them in two ways: either *total opposition* or *conditional support*. In countries where the proletarian class in its path to complete liberation from capital does not share common interests with any of the other social classes, that is, where the proletariat and the other social classes do not have any common ground in their struggles — and such countries are usually those endowed with constitutional governments — there Social Democracy's attitude to the various bourgeois movements is one of total opposition. But in countries where the proletariat and the bourgeoisie share common ground, where the two social classes have reached a sufficient stage of historical development, and consequently the preliminary realisation of certain tasks presents itself to both as an historical necessity — there the organised revolutionary proletariat relates conditionally to the bourgeois movements. Such cases are usually to be found in countries with monarchist governments, where economic development has raised two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, onto the historical stage, which have almost simultaneously come to self-consciousness of their class interests, and where the absolutist regime appears as a barrier whose elimination becomes a necessity for the further development of society, with a view to greater success in the subsequent struggles of the social classes. In such countries, the proletariat, organised in its own class party, *supports* every revolutionary or oppositional bourgeois movement that puts forward the destruction of the monarchy and its replacement with a constitutional government in its programme. Turkey has a despotic regime against which various revolutionary movements are struggling, and Macedonian Social Democracy should only *support* the bourgeois revolutionary movement in so far as the latter appears as a genuinely independent revolutionary movement that advances the replacement of despotism with a democratic, constitutional regime in its programme. However, here I want to emphasise not the bourgeois character of the Macedonian revolutionary movement — which is so obvious — but merely to focus on the question of the extent to which the Macedonian revolutionary movement, expressed in IMRO, really represents an organised revolutionary movement with a certain definite physiognomy, and with a certain political programme.

The characteristic features of an *organised* revolutionary movement are its theory and its programme, the particular demands that it strives to achieve. And a movement that does not have its own theory is a *blind* and *chaotic* movement. The revolutionary movement in European Turkey represents just such a movement. It resembles a headless lion. For an organised revolutionary movement must meet two requirements. On the one hand, it must have precisely determined what it is fighting against, what it rejects; and, on the other, for all this to be crystal clear, it must know in advance what will replace the repudiated system, that is, in what name the struggle is being waged, and whose interests it seeks to satisfy, in short, the *fundamental causes and motives* that gave rise to the struggle must be made clear. When a social class takes part in a given revolutionary movement, it does so in the name of its material interests. This is why, for example, it becomes necessary for it to know the nature of the future politi-

cal system with which it seeks to replace the present one. The ideologues of this class usually grasp sooner and more definitely its interests and tasks, in the name of which they organise it for battle. However, the social classes in Macedonia participating in the revolutionary movement have still not generated from within their midst the kind of ideologues that really understand the interests of the classes they represent and are able to *set* the goals of the revolutionary movement. This is why, in its development, the Macedonian revolutionary movement is full of the most unpleasant surprises, and why its activists cannot foresee the real results of its activity. That is why this movement resembles a headless lion that leaps about in different directions without being able to advance towards given and well-established goals.

The petit-bourgeoisie is the principal social class in Macedonia, the one that feels most insecure under the present political regime, and the one that takes part in the revolutionary movement. Consequently, whenever we want to explain the aims and tactics of the revolutionary movement in Macedonia, we should bear in mind that the latter is the fruit of the dissatisfied petit-bourgeoisie. Only on the basis of its social position, and its class interests, can we explain its revolutionary movement.

The petit-bourgeoisie is not a class in the full sense of the word, that is to say, by virtue of the historical development of society, it can never seize political power, and cannot become the ruling class for a prolonged historical period. It is condemned by history to extinction, as its class interests are in contradiction to the development of society. The petit-bourgeoisie is a class with a contradictory social position, it has no future, and for this reason it is unable to produce its own ideologues to fix its class interests and its deepest aspirations in a coherent theory, and to carry through its social ideal. The whole worldview of its ideologists is contradictory, as the very social position of the class they represent is also contradictory.

The Macedonian revolutionaries of IMRO are representatives of the petit-bourgeoisie in Macedonia. We mentioned above that the revolutionary movement in Macedonia has still not created its own theory, but this does not mean that it has not set itself any definite goals. In the *Constitution* of the Organisation, we find that the 'Macedonian-Thracian Revolutionary Organisation', that we have designated by 'IMRO', has as its goal to organise the Bulgarian population in European Turkey and to win freedom for Macedonia and Thrace through an armed uprising of this Bulgarian population. Even here, in this fundamental programmatic position, the reader can see that the Macedonian revolutionaries are taking a contradictory stand. The aim being followed is the liberation of Macedonia through revolution, but there is a discrepancy between this aim and the means adopted to achieve it, the organisation and arming solely of the Bulgarian population, which in relation to the rest of the population of European Turkey in no way constitutes the majority... But let us leave this to one side. IMRO wants the liberation of Macedonia and Thrace and the establishment of autonomous administrations in these provinces. As a *nationalist* organisation, it demands the elimination of *the Turkish yoke* and the Turkish administration. But what type of administration will these autonomous provinces have, and what will

be the nature of their future political order — of this IMRO breathes not a word. It appears that IMRO puts forward such broad demands so that it can smuggle into them whatever content suits it. The future autonomous Macedonia could have monarchical, republican or constitutional governments, it makes no difference to the revolutionaries of IMRO — a characteristic feature of the *petit-bourgeoisie*. It is distinguished by a narrowness of horizons and purely emotional outbursts; it is sick and tired of that political yoke, it wants freedom, but what kind of freedom does not matter. And because it does not have any basic principles that could be propagandised by the individual committees, because there are no ideological bonds between the latter, then IMRO as a whole — which they constitute — does not represent a single, *ideologically coherent, revolutionary organisation*. Indeed, the individual local committees are linked together by district committees, and above them all stands the Central Committee, which has the right to despatch its own assassins to wipe out all those who 'harm' the cause, but none of this represents an ideologically coherent organisation, but one that is held together in a purely *administrative* manner, a *Jacobin revolutionary organisation*.

The lack of ideas in general in IMRO is the reason why the latter is to a great degree a chaotic, dependant organisation, and the result of all this is disunity and the appearance of several grouplets within IMRO.

The 10-year existence of IMRO provides sufficient evidence to show that it has been left at the mercy of fate to jump from one extreme to another, to prepare here one, and there another, adventure, in spite of the good intentions of some of its leaders; in short, the latter, instead of directing IMRO onto the right path, were themselves pushed by the anarchy in Macedonia down a path that they did not want to follow. In general, the Macedonian revolutionaries have absolutely no foresight, and do not place themselves in the vanguard of various events, but are always dragged along by them. Even at the very beginning, when they put together the constitution of the organisation, they imagined that the revolutionary movement would always develop within the framework of this constitution. However, reality soon intervened to expose the falsity of such a concept. Shortly after their establishment, a whole series of local organisations were faced with the dilemma of whether to remain forever within their narrow nationalist framework and consequently to remain without any significance for society at large, or to broaden these structures to draw into the organisation elements from the other equally oppressed nationalities. Such organisations turned to the Central Committee of IMRO to ask whether they could ignore the clause of the constitution that forbade the acceptance of anyone apart from Bulgarians into the organisation, and, after the Central Committee had replied in the negative, such organisations 'on their own authority' drew up a new written constitution in which the 'nationalist' clause was replaced by an 'internationalist' one.⁵⁷ And so the Central Committee thought that it 'led' and 'ran' the local

57. 'Gorov' is presumably referring to the statutes drafted in 1902 by the leaders of the IMRO left, Gotse Delchev (1872-) and Giorché Petrov (1854-1921). These were never adopted by a

committees, while local committees were in fact going down their own path, dictated for each by the local conditions that the 'leaders' failed to understand. Still it could not have been otherwise: the more a social movement expands and the greater the growth of the elements that constitute it, the more it develops according to its own laws and the smaller the rôle that individual personalities can play within it.

Another fact demonstrating that IMRO developed in a direction which unleashed certain unforeseen consequences is the uprising of 1903. So many untrue and contrary opinions are put forward as to the causes of this uprising that it is worth pausing before this question. Even a majority of our comrades share such opinions. Some Macedonian revolutionaries consider that the main reason for the 'untimeliness' of the uprising was the dishonest attitude of the Bulgarian government towards the Macedonian Question, whereas others find them in the typical lies of the Central Committee of IMRO up to and during the uprising and the illegality of the congress that proclaimed the insurrection. There is a degree of truth to such opinions. It is true that IMRO was never completely independent, that the Bulgarian government has always, as far as it could, exploited this organisation, and that its most eminent representatives have been and still are the most devoted and reliable agents of the Bulgarian government. It is true that the promises of the Bulgarian government were taken into account when the decision was taken to proclaim the insurrection, and that on the eve of the insurrection itself the IMRO representatives in Bulgaria sent guerrilla bands to the border with the following encouragement: 'Go forth, you are the vanguard of the Bulgarian army: the Bulgarian government will shortly declare war on Turkey!' On the other hand, it is also true that the Central Committee can be blamed for many actions that sought to precipitate and extend the 'untimely' uprising. All of this is true, but it is also true that these are not the main causes that provoked the uprising. We believe that the latter is the logical consequence of the social position of the elements involved in IMRO and of the tactic of the latter, and that the meddling of the Bulgarian government is only a secondary factor that merely facilitated the declaration of the uprising.

The insurrection brought to light all those tendencies that had come together earlier, but which could not manifest themselves until the uprising mainly because of the Jacobin, mechanical centralism of IMRO. Immediately after the uprising, the organisation felt weak and, dissatisfied with its tactics and organisational fanaticism up to that point, everyone began to speak out. A whole series of groups appeared. Side by side with the old local organisations, groups loyal to Sarafov appeared in some places; similarly 'Sarafist' guerrilla bands arrived in some districts. It should be emphasised that the new groups did not differ substantially from the old ones; they were not divided by any *ideological* differences. Each one of the more prominent revolutionaries has his own sympathisers and sympathising organisations. Everything revolves around the personal qualities

and virtues of the leaders. These grouplets often greatly resemble tiny coteries. Sarafov, Damyantov and Garvanov⁵⁸ are their leaders. A characteristic worth mentioning is that the above three are equally close to and loyal to the present Bulgarian government, even though their bands in Macedonia sometimes come to blows.

Of the grouplets in IMRO, only one is on the way to differentiating itself as an independent current. This is the left wing of IMRO, known as the 'decentralist' current. It strives to theorise the Macedonian Question, even though it has not crystallised sufficiently to warrant our full sympathy. It can be considered to be completely independent and foreign to all influences on the part of the Bulgarian government. Gerdzhirov,⁵⁹ Sandanski,⁶⁰ Chemopeevev,⁶¹ Mirazchiev and others are to be found in its ranks.

And so we can now conclude. From what has so far been said, it is clear that IMRO does not in and of itself represent a single, ideologically coherent whole. The Bulgarian, and especially the Macedonian social democrats, should relate differently and very carefully to the individual groups. Our comrades should completely oppose all of the groups except the 'decentralists'. But we should relate conditionally to the 'decentralists'. We should support them conditionally *in so far as* they become autonomous and crystallise into an independent revolutionary movement guided by a strictly defined programme, a programme which must without fail have the following demand: *the abolition of the present Turkish monarchy and its replacement by a republican constitutional regime.*

The revolutionary movement in Turkey will only begin to resemble a true revolutionary movement when its activists *renounce the rifle and the bomb* and turn to the *written word and the printing press* to win over the people. But we are firmly convinced that the revolutionary movement in Turkey will only be compelled positively to determine its status and allegiance when there is a strong, organised social democratic workers' movement over there, when the proletarian class in Turkey grows numerically and becomes class-conscious, and when the latter directs its struggle towards Turkish despotism — only then will the present petit-bourgeois revolutionary movement in Macedonia be able to determine its own fate. And we are so bold as to say of the Macedonian revolutionary movement what the eminent Russian theoretician of scientific socialism, G Plekhanov, said 20 years ago of the Russian revolutionary movement: *'It will succeed either as a proletarian movement or not at all!'*

58. Ivan Garvanov (1869-1907) was a teacher and leader of the IMRO right wing. He was chairman of the IMRO Central Committee during 1901-03, and was assassinated on orders of Sandanski, leader of the IMRO left after 1903.

59. Mihail Gerdzhirov (1877-1947) was a Bulgarian-born teacher, anarchist and IMRO military leader in Thrace during the Ilinden uprising.

60. Yurc Sandanski (1872-1915) was the pre-eminent leader of VMRO left, 1903-15. See glossary.

61. Hristo Chemopeevev (1868-1915) was the Bulgarian-born leader of Strumitsa revolutionary district. Leader of the IMRO left during 1905-09, he was the founder of the People's Federative Party (Bulgarian Section) after the Young Turk Revolution. He returned to guerrilla struggle and joined the CC of the reactivated IMRO in 1911, and was elected deputy for Strumitsa to the Bulgarian parliament on the governing National-Liberal slate in 1914.

IV: The Revolution in Turkey and the Balkan Federation

Introduction

IN July 1908, Macedonia was once again the scene of revolution. This time, however, it was not the work of Macedonian-Bulgarian nationalists (IMRO) seeking to separate Macedonia off from Turkey, but of the very forces who had been sent to crush them — that is, discontented Turkish junior army officers, known as 'Young Turks' (the Committee of Union and Progress), seeking to save the Ottoman Empire from external dismemberment.¹ The Young Turks were compelled to act by the rumour that the King of England and the Tsar of Russia, meeting in Reval on the Baltic during 8-10 June, had agreed to the separation of Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire. On 3 July 1908, a Young Turk officer, Major Niyazi Bey,² and 200 soldiers took to the mountains demanding the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1876.³ Soon more officers followed suit, until the entire Third (Macedonian) Army mutinied, threatening to march on Constantinople if its demands were not met. As the forces sent to crush the rebellion joined the conspirators, the

1. The Young Turk movement originated in opposition student circles in Istanbul in the 1890s seeking to re-establish the constitution and parliament abrogated in 1877 by Sultan Abdul Hamid II (ruled 1876-1909). They joined liberal émigrés in Paris to found the Committee of Union and Progress, led by Ahmet Rıza (1859-1930), a former bureaucrat. The CUP was inspired by his centralist and nationalist ideas. Under the driving force of Mehmet Talât (1874-1921), a postal official in Salonika, an underground domestic opposition emerged which succeeded in winning over the officers of the Third (Macedonia) and Second (Thrace) Armies. In 1907, it merged with the Parisian émigrés, adopting the name of the CUP.
2. Resneli Niyazi (1873-1912) was an Albanian Ottomanist who led the Albanian volunteers in the 'Action Army' that suppressed the April 1909 counter-revolution in Istanbul. He was not a major figure in the CUP, either before or after the revolution.
3. In 1876, a coup led by Ahmet Şefik Mithat Pasha (1822-1884), a reformer and ex-Grand Vizier, deposed Sultan Abdülaziz (1830-1876) and introduced the first ever Ottoman constitution and parliament. Exploiting the war with Russia in 1877-78, the new Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, suspended both the constitution and parliament indefinitely, thus inaugurating his legendary despotism.

Sultan, Abdul Hamid, was compelled to yield, and the Constitution was proclaimed during the night of 23-24 July 1908.

In Macedonia, the different nationalities rushed to embrace the revolution as a deliverance from the Sultan's tyranny. As one contemporary records: 'The sudden attainment of liberty, practically without bloodshed, produced in Macedonia a kind of delirium... The people gave themselves up to transports of joy.'⁴ The deadly struggle for primacy in Macedonia between the rival nationalist guerrilla movements and the Turkish regime seemed to have simply evaporated in the new spirit of fraternity. Thus Yané Sandanski, the feared 'Tsar of Pirin'⁵ and leader of the IMRO left, on arriving in Salonika, capital of the revolution, on 28 July, with a compliment of armed *chetnitsi* (fighters), was embraced by the Young Turk leader and hero of the revolution, Enver Bey,⁶ and brought before a huge and ecstatic gathering of the different nationalities. Addressing the throng, Sandanski called for a united struggle of all of the peoples of the empire to extend the revolution:

But we are not stopping here! For we are convinced that only wide freedom, only the fullest democratisation of the institutions of the country can bring prosperity to the people and cut the ground from under the national strife and propaganda.

Down with tyranny!

Long live the fatherland!

Long live the people!

Long live the revolution!

Long live freedom!

However, the hopes invested in the new dawn of liberty were to be cruelly betrayed in the coming years. The 'Great Ottoman' ideal of the Young Turks meant the administrative centralisation of the empire, the modernisation of its armed forces, and the creation of a united 'Ottoman nation', into which all the non-Muslim nationalities would 'merge' on the basis of the new 'Ottoman patriotism'. So, even as they brought *Hürriyet* (freedom) to the peoples of the empire, the Young Turks had decided to solve the 'national question' in Turkey by means of the forced *Ottomanisation* of the national minorities.⁸ Their only other

4. See Charles Ruden Buxton, *Turkey in Revolution*, London, 1909, pp70-1.

5. Pirin refers to the Pirin mountains, today in south-west Bulgaria.

6. Enver Pasha (1881-1922) was the Young Turk leader, Minister of War and dominant personality in the government after 1913. After the collapse of the empire, he sought to promote pan-Turkist revolution in Soviet Central Asia, where he died in a skirmish with the Red Army.

7. Cited in Mercia MacDermott, *Far Freedom and Perfection: The Life of Yané Sandansky*, London, 1988, p347.

8. See Eric Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926*, Leiden, 1984, p23. 'Ottomanisation' involved dismantling the traditional structures of communal self-administration of the different religious communities of the empire, known as the *Millet* ('nation') system, and the universal instruction of schoolchildren in the Turkish language.

significant objective, the abolition of the regime of *Capitulations*⁹ that had enabled European capitalism to gain a stranglehold over the economy, was also aimed at strengthening the Ottoman state. The idea of social revolution — for example, the elimination of feudalism in the countryside — was quite foreign to the Young Turks, who were literally the sons of Turkish landowners. Nevertheless, this was the first step to *bourgeois revolution* in Turkey.

For this reason, the European socialist press was quick to support it. Christian Rakovsky in 'The Turkish Revolution'¹⁰ (below) welcomed the latter as a potential solution to the Eastern Question. For Rakovsky, as for Trotsky, only a regenerated, democratic Turkey, a Turkey transformed into a federation of its peoples, could halt the imperialist competition in the Balkans and Near East that threatened to plunge Europe into war.¹¹ At the same time, he recognised that the Young Turks, with their nationalist vision of a resurgent *Turkish Empire*, threatened to unleash new nationalist struggles that would spell the downfall of Turkey. So who could save the revolution? Rakovsky's answer was... the Young Turks! According to Rakovsky's stagist conception of history, the bourgeois revolution was the historical task of the Young Turks, the representatives of the nascent Turkish bourgeoisie. In the manner of the Menshevik attitude to the coming bourgeois revolution in Russia, Rakovsky relegated the proletariat to the rôle of a passive supporter of the Turkish bourgeoisie. For this reason, Rakovsky's socialist policy involved little more than pleading with the Young Turks to abandon their real class interests in favour of their imagined, best interests.¹²

Blagoev, in 'The Revolution in Turkey and Social Democracy'¹³ (an edited version of which appears below), entertained absolutely no illusions in the Young Turks.¹⁴ In his opinion, the Young Turks, given their commitment to a centralised, *Turkish Empire*, would not go beyond the introduction of constitutional government, and would increasingly become counter-revolutionary.

9. The *Capitulations* fixed by international treaty the tariffs levied by the Ottoman state on imports at a very low level. This meant that European manufactures had virtually open access to the Turkish market. In this way, Turkey was prevented from exercising an independent economic policy. See Suraya Faroqui, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quater and Sevet Pamuk, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume 2, 1600-1914*, Cambridge, 1994, pp854-6.

10. This article was published precisely one week after the 24 June Revolution in *La Socialisme*, the monthly review of the Guesde-Lafargue 'orthodox Marxist' tendency of the French socialist party (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière).

11. See Leon Trotsky, 'The New Turkey', *Korrespondenz Mysl*, 3 January 1909, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-13: The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, New York, 1981.

12. Rakovsky was to stick to this position until the collapse of Turkey in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. See for example his 'La révolution et la contre-révolution en Turquie' ('Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Turkey'), *La Socialisme*, 15 May 1909.

13. This was the leading article in a party pamphlet of the same title (*Revolutsijnata v Turcija i sotsialdemokratizacija*, Sofia, 1908). Its aim was to outline the tasks of the party's Macedonian offshoot in the revolution, the Social Democratic Workers Group of Macedonia and Thrace.

14. This was also the position of the Serbian Social Democratic Party. See Dimitrije Tucović, 'Revolucija u Turckoj' ('The Revolution in Turkey'), *Radnicka Novine*, 14 (27) April 1909, in his *Subrana Dela (Collected Works)*, Volume 2, Belgrade, 1975, pp426-30.

Hence for Blagoev — like the Bolshevik attitude before 1917 to the bourgeois revolution in Russia — the very future of the revolution depended on the extent to which the proletariat became the leading force within it. And so it proved. Once they had dealt with the counter-revolutionary coup of April 1909¹⁵ — provoked by their unwillingness to settle accounts with the *ancien régime*, beginning with the monarchy — the Young Turks turned against the non-Turkish nationalities and the emerging labour movement.¹⁶ In response, the pro-Bulgarian wing of IMRO embarked on a terrorist campaign in Macedonia, and the Albanians launched mass insurrections in consecutive years from 1909 to 1912. In this way, the Young Turk counter-revolution not only buried the democratic revolution, but also opened the door to the final disintegration of the empire.

As far as the national question was concerned, Blagoev considered that its resolution was intimately bound up with the victory of the Turkish Revolution. Ottoman Turkey remained the major barrier to the national unification of the Balkan peoples, the *sine qua non* for their national independence and capitalist development. Blagoev's revolutionary solution to the problem of Ottoman Turkey mirrored that of the Serbian socialist Svetozar Marković with regard to the Habsburg Empire in his article 'Slav Austria and Serb Unity' (see above). Blagoev called for the revolutionary destruction of the empire — though not in the usual nationalist sense of its territorial dismemberment into petty national states.¹⁷ His demand was for the destruction of the social and political structures that underpinned the Ottoman dynastic-imperial state and enslaved the non-Muslim nationalities. Only a revolution that obliterated Ottoman feudal despotism could provide a basis for the nationalities of the empire to live together as equals and for the national unification of the Balkan peoples as part of a great Balkan-Turkish federation.

Thus, Blagoev's demand for 'the right of free self-determination of the na-

15. On the night of 12 April 1909, a monarchist uprising of soldiers, religious students and clergy broke out in the capital demanding the restoration of the *Şeriat* (Islamic Law). The Young Turks organised an 'Action Army' in Macedonia, made up of regular army units and Bulgarian-Macedonian and Albanian volunteers like Yurii Sandanski and Niyazi Bey, which marched on the capital and subdued the revolt. On 27 April, Abdul Hamid was deposed as Sultan and replaced by the pliant Mehmet Reşat (ruled 1909-18). See Aykut Kansu, *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-13*, Leiden, New York and Köln, 1999, pp.77-126.
16. In the summer of 1909, a battery of laws were passed limiting individual and collective freedoms. Trade unions were banned in the public sector, compulsory arbitration was introduced, and strike action was made difficult. The law on associations banned *national* political parties, in effect disenfranchising the non-Turkish nationalities. Severe restrictions were also placed on public meetings and the freedom of the press. See Enik J Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, London and New York, 1993, p.98, 105.
17. Fikret Adanir has argued that the 'Narrow's' idea of a Balkan federation presupposed the destruction of the Ottoman state...[hence] we can establish a close parallelism between the policies of the Bulgarian nationalist bourgeoisie on the one hand and the Narrow social democrats on the other. They willingly accepted the risk of a Balkan war which would lead to the partition of Macedonia.' See 'The National Question and the Genesis and Development of Socialism in the Ottoman Empire: The Case of Macedonia', in Mete Tunçay and Enik Jan Zürcher (eds), *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1923*, London, 1994. We will leave it to the reader to judge whether these wild claims have any basis.

nationalities living in the 'Turkish Empire', listed in the article reproduced below, did not imply their right to secession, but to democratic self-government within Turkey. Today, we would call this 'national autonomy'. Blagoev opposed the right to secession, as it would unleash a process of endless fragmentation in the Balkans. Every nationality would demand its own nation-state, but as none lived in compact settlement with its compatriots, each demand for self-determination would be trumped by an opposing one. Consequently, the only result could be internecine war, leaving the door open to the Great Powers to divide and rule the region. Instead, a revolutionary, federal Turkey provided the model and basic unit for the construction of a Balkan-Turkish federation that could defend the national independence of all the peoples against the imperialist powers and enable modern, capitalist development to flourish.

Rakovsky also rejected the right to self-determination of the nationalities of the empire, but for different reasons. Without a strong, viable Turkish Empire, there could be no solution to the national question in the Balkans, since that alone could guarantee the national independence of the Balkan peoples. Hence his *unconditional* support for the Young Turks, the only force in Turkey with an *unconditional* attachment to the empire. By contrast, like Svetozar Marković with respect to the Habsburg Empire, Blagoev was no supporter of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state, of the integrity of this 'prison-house of peoples'. He supported the *Revolution in Turkey tout court*, never Turkey or the Young Turks. However, as Rakovsky's *Ottomanism* showed, in practice it was difficult to separate support for the revolution from support for the Ottoman state unless one proceeded from a defence of the right to self-determination to the point of secession. The Macedonian socialists took Blagoev's rejection of this right in two opposing directions: on the one hand, the defence of the integrity of the empire as the necessary framework of revolution, and, on the other, a refusal to defend it in favour of an abstract demand for a Balkan federation.

The IMRO Left took the first path, here represented by Dimo Hadzhi Dimov. In 'Our Political Standpoint' (an edited version of which appears below), written at the end of August 1908, Dimov warned the pro-Bulgarian right wing of IMRO that its goal of 'national autonomy', that is, independence for Macedonia, would not lead to the latter's liberation, but to its dismemberment by the Great Powers. Thus, the solution to the Macedonian question no longer implied the break-up of Turkey, but rather its revolutionary transformation into a democratic federation of nationalities. Hence his explicit commitment to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire as the necessary framework for revolutionary change.

If Blagoev had managed to defend the revolution without for one moment defending the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the IMRO Left equated the two, becoming zealous Ottoman patriots. The IMRO Left had not abandoned its revolutionary Macedonian nationalism, but had merely projected it onto the *Ottoman Empire*, the integrity of the empire was in its view the only guarantor of an integral Macedonia. Hence, just like the Young Turks, it enjoined the nations of the empire to abandon their selfish interests and unite under the new 'Ottoman patriotism'. Inspired by this new ideal, it established in August 1909 the

People's Federative Party (Bulgarian Section) as the nucleus of an all-Ottoman democratic revolutionary party to which the progressive elements of the other nationalities would eventually federate.¹⁸ The socialists of the IMRO Left/People's Federative Party thus sought to substitute for the lack a united, progressive revolutionary *Ottoman* bourgeoisie. But, since the objective basis for this was lacking, their revolutionary *Ottoman* petit-bourgeois nationalism led them in practice to play the rôle of the left wing of the Young Turks. This was the final, fatal consequence of the initial failure of the IMRO left to link the struggle for national liberation with the struggle for socialism.

By contrast, the Macedonian followers of the Narrows (the Social Democratic Workers Group of Macedonia and Thrace), developed the aspect of Blagoev's position that rejected any identification with the Ottoman state, to which they counterposed a Balkan federation.

Like Blagoev, the Macedonian Social Democrats considered that, with the proclamation of the constitution, the Young Turks had become a counter-revolutionary force, and therefore the working class was called on to play the leading rôle in the revolution. But its interpretation of this perspective seems to have been *more Narrow than the Narrows*. For example, it remained indifferent when counter-revolutionary forces temporarily seized power in Constantinople in April 1909.¹⁹ Similarly, the idea of the leading rôle of the proletariat in the revolution came to mean that it was *the* only progressive class, and hence a policy of isolation from the other oppressed classes and a lack of interest in the agrarian question.

As far as the national question was concerned, the Macedonian Social Democrats were also *plus monarchiste que le roi*. If Blagoev identified the right to 'self-determination' with the democratic self-government of the peoples *within* the framework of the Ottoman Empire, the Macedonian Social Democrats managed to avoid ever referring to this right. In reality, their starting point — in 'The Balkan Federation and the Workers' (below) — was the need for a Balkan federation, including Turkey, as the only means of protecting the national independence of the peoples of the Balkans and of promoting the economic development of the peninsula. How abstract this position was can be seen in the final

18. See Zorka Pürvanova, *Mezhdur mezhubstvenniya byuriet i mezhubstvenna ruina. Natsionalnite dvizheniya v Evropska Turcija i Mladoturkijet rezhim, 1908-1912 (Between Unrealized Freedom and Inevitable War: National Movements in European Turkey and the Young Turk Regime, 1908-1912)*, Sofia, 2002; Manol Pandevski, *Politicheski Partii i organizacii vo Makedonija, 1908-1912 (Political Parties and Organizations in Macedonia, 1908-1912)*, Skopje, 1965; Angel Tomov, 'Makedonskite partii sled mladoturkijata prevrat' ('The Macedonian Parties after the Young Turk Coup'), *Makedonska Misl*, no 1-2, pp53-61, no 5-6, pp188-95, 1946-47.

19. The Macedonian social democrats did not join the 'Action Army' that marched on Constantinople, and attacked those socialists who did: 'They went voluntarily to shed their blood in defence of the constitution and freedom. This shows that the working class in European Turkey has revolutionary instincts. However it is not class-conscious, it does not act as a class with its own programme. It went to shed its blood in defence of the constitution and freedom, but did not use this struggle to win rights for itself. This means that it went under an alien banner, and followed the call of a party foreign to it.' See *Rabotnichestka Iskra (Workers' Spark)*, 16 May 1909

article, 'The National Struggles and Socialism'. Here it was argued that the national struggles in the empire would continue, given the interference of the Balkan states and the Great Powers on the one hand, and the Young Turks' attempts to 'Ottomanise' the national minorities on the other. Only the working class could overcome national conflict in the empire, and it would do so once it had adopted socialist consciousness.

We can thus see that all the thinkers presented here avoided the question of the right to national self-determination to the point of secession. Thus led Dimov and Rakovsky to identify with the Ottoman Empire as the embodiment of the Young Turk revolution. Blagoev was in part able to avoid this problem, as he did not believe that the national question could be resolved within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, but only at the level of the Balkans as a whole, within a Balkan federation. At first sight, both positions appear to resemble 'Austro-Marxist' thinking on the national question.

Austro-Marxism, broadly speaking, was characterised by its commitment to the integrity of the *Habsburg* Empire, which it sought to *reform* into a democratic federation organised according to the principle of national territorial autonomy. Hence the Austro-Marxists implacably opposed the right of self-determination to the point of secession. The question therefore arises as to whether we should speak of an equivalent '*Turco-Marxism*' committed to the Ottoman Empire as the necessary framework within which to resolve the national question along the lines of a democratic federation of nationalities. The crucial difference between the Austro-Marxists and the Balkan socialists is that the former were *reformists*, while the latter were *revolutionaries*. The Austro-Marxists sought to preserve the *Habsburg* Empire, while the Balkan socialists sought to overthrow the *Ottoman* Empire. Hence the consequences of the two positions were radically different.

As we will see in the next section, when Austria-Hungary annexed the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1908, the Austro-Marxists refused to support Bosnia's right to self-determination to the point of secession. By contrast, Blagoev supported the declaration of independence by Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire on 5 October 1908, even though he was fully aware that it was calculated to undermine the legitimacy of the Young Turk revolution.²⁰ Similarly, Dimitrije Tucović, on behalf of the Serbian Social Democratic Party, defended the Albanian uprising of 1910 against the brutal centralising policy of the Young Turks, even though it threatened the integrity of Turkey.²¹

Nevertheless, in the absence of an explicit defence of the right to national self-determination to the point of secession, the danger of *Turco-Marxism* was

20. Blagoev's preference was for Bulgaria and Turkey to form a Balkan federation. Bulgaria had achieved independence from Turkey, but not from the Great Powers. See 'Novoto Polozhenie' ('The New Situation'), *Novo Vreme* (*New Times*), no 12, November 1908.

21. Tucović argued that the Albanians could only achieve their freedom and unification as an autonomous unit in a Balkan federation. See 'Albanako Pitanje' ('The Albanian Question'), *Borba* (*Struggle*), no 9, 1 May 1910; 'Iz zemlje vešala' ('From the Land of the Scaffold'), *Borba*, no 14, 16 July 1910.

ever present, particularly in the IMRO Left. The defence by socialists like Dimov of the integrity of the Ottoman state means that it is correct to speak of a *Turco-Marxist tendency* in the politics of the Macedonian national left (and in socialists like Rakovsky and the Jewish *Workers Federation of Salonika*).²²

But if the Serbian socialists and Bulgarian Narrows were not Austro-Marxists, neither were they Leninists as regards the national question. Like Lenin, they neither promoted the separation of oppressed nationalities from oppressor states as a solution to the national question, nor did they defend the integrity of such states. But without Lenin's defence of a *right* to secession, the socialists could not offer a *concrete* alternative to the national struggles provoked by the intensifying Turkish oppression of the Christian nationalities, and could not unite the proletariat of the ruling nation with that of the oppressed nationalities in a common revolutionary movement. Thus the Balkan socialists found themselves either proposing reforms within the Ottoman Empire or counterposing the idea of a Balkan federation to the national struggles in the empire. Nevertheless, the concept of the Balkan federation enabled socialists like Blagoev and Tucović to avoid both a *Turco-Marxist* accommodation to the Ottoman *state* and infection with the nationalism of their own bourgeoisie, allowing them to see that the unification and independence of the peoples of the Balkans could only be posed and achieved at the level of the Balkans as a whole.

Andreja Živković

Christian Rakovsky The Turkish Revolution²³

AFTER Russia and Persia, Turkey now enters the revolutionary movement. But what characterises the Turkish Revolution is its rapid evolution and swift success — at least in appearance. In the space of two weeks, the rebel army has become the master of Macedonia. The terrified Sultan hastened to

22. The Workers' Federation of Salonika (1909-18) was founded by a group of Jewish militants as the nucleus of an Ottoman socialist party organised as a federation of national sections. However, the WFS remained almost exclusively Jewish, only attracting a tiny group of ex-Narrow Bulgarian socialists around Angel Tomov, the editor of the paper of the People's Federative Party, and Dimitar Vlahov (1878-1953), former general secretary of the now defunct PFP, parliamentary deputy for Salonika and later President of Macedonia within Tito's Yugoslavia. As the representative of an extra-territorial nationality, the Sephardic Ottoman Jews, it was stoutly Ottoman. After the incorporation of Salonika into Greece in 1913, it was the driving force behind the creation of the first all-Greek socialist party (SEKE) in 1918.

23. *Le Socialisme*, 1 August 1908. Translated from the French by Ted Crawford. *Le Socialisme* (1907-13) was the review of the orthodox Marxist wing of French Socialist Party (SFIO, established 1905), and edited by Jules Guesde (1845-1922).

agree to a constitution or rather to reinstate that of 1876.²⁴ Thus the last European autocracy is overthrown. The statement of General Ignatiev,²⁵ the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople at the time when the first Turkish constitution was proclaimed — 'We will not allow Russia to remain the only country in Europe without a constitution' — now has no basis. At least in theory the whole of Europe is constitutionalist.

But if the changes in Turkey have a more general interest, it is in relation to the famous 'Eastern Question'.

Are we on the brink of solving this and thus of eliminating one of the greatest causes of war?

Undoubtedly, if anyone, apart the populations of the Turkish East themselves, has an interest in the complete solution to this question, it is the proletariat. Turkey today is an open field for the capitalist and imperialist conspiracies of all countries. All of them, while awaiting the collapse of the empire to seize a portion of its territories, seek at present to attain greater influence within it and more financial concessions and privileges. It has to be said that the division of the possessions of the 'sick man', before he is even dead, has been done with great success.

Thanks to a Sultan who is only concerned with self-preservation and a despotic, ignorant and corrupt bureaucracy, the vultures from every country, the agents of triumphant capitalism, have succeeded in building their nest in every corner of this vast empire. On the other hand, a motley crowd, the nationalist propagandists, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serb, Greek and so on, seek by fire, sword and money to increase their sphere of influence.

All this is at the expense of the people of Turkey, abandoned by everyone, struggling in their despair and impotence against the Sultan's tyranny, the intrigues of their compatriots in other countries and the insatiable appetites of the so-called protecting powers.

A revolution which gave the initiative and freedom of action to the peoples of Turkey by suppressing or reducing the influence of all these harmful factors would, by this alone, solve the Eastern Question.

Only a regenerated, democratic and strong Turkey can successfully repeat the famous 'Hands Off' of Gladstone,²⁶ and thus cut short all the appetites which its state of decomposition have provoked among its neighbours near and far.

The consequences for peace and for the cause of the working class that this

24. In 1876, a coup led by Ahmet Şefik Mithat Paşa (1822-1884), a reformer and ex-Grand Vizier, deposed Sultan Abdulaziz (1830-1876), and introduced the first ever Ottoman constitution and parliament. Exploiting the war with Russia in 1877-78, the new Sultan, Abdulhamid II (reigned 1876-1909), suspended both the constitution and parliament indefinitely, thus inaugurating his legendary despotism.

25. Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev (1832-1908) was a Russian diplomat and statesman who promoted pan-Slav revolts during the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 to advance Russian goals at the expense of Turkey and Austria-Hungary.

26. Gladstone argued that Britain should not defend ('hands off') the decaying and barbarous Ottoman Empire.

change will bring are incalculable. In general it must be said — and here is the great historic importance of the awakening of all the people of the East and Far East — that the repulse of the aggressive and greedy imperialism of the capitalist Empire will make absolutely clear the necessity of finding a solution to the difficulties created by over-production and capitalist anarchy in a different model of national economy.

With the colonial safety valve no longer existing, the real solution of social justice must be found willy nilly.

But besides this general and broad consequence, the Turkish Revolution will have other more immediate and more practical consequences from the point of view of the foreign policy of all Balkan and Western groups whose life is bound up with that of Turkey — that is, a general lowering of tension, and perhaps grounds for some disarmament.

That is why, we repeat, the working class must greet the Turkish revolution with enthusiasm.

But are we seeing a revolution, or a military coup without major consequences? We will soon see. However, it seems that from the start the Turkish Revolution is showing a very dangerous tendency to go off the rails.

It is incontrovertible that the only way of pacifying Turkey, convulsed by so many passions, is the greatest possible liberty. Only the latter, by satisfying the just claims of the different peoples of the empire, can unite them in a spirit of common solidarity. Unfortunately, the power of the Young Turks is totally inadequate from this point of view. The 1876 constitution, which they demanded and obtained, leaves a lot to be desired. It leaves the autocratic power of the Sultan almost intact.

On the other hand, the Young Turks, doubtless struck by the state of decay in which they find the empire, have only one thing in mind: to strengthen the central power as much as possible. Instead of an autocratic Sultan, there will be a no less autocratic oligarchy. And yet there is no country which lends itself less to such a regime than Turkey, with its diversity of languages, customs and economic and social conditions in its different provinces. And it is precisely this pitfall that the Young Turks refuse to see. They do not wish to understand the historic truth that it is only in a federation of all the peoples of the empire that the latter can find salvation, and that the old slogan of 'autonomy or anatomy' — that is to say federation or partition — is today more true than ever.

In fact, at present, after so many bloody struggles, the peoples of Turkey will submit even less than they did 32 years ago to the tyranny of a half-absolutist central government, which the Constitution of 1876 once again promises us. We do not ignore the difficulties which stand in the way of the progress of the Turkish Revolution, but the Young Turks make things worse themselves by being eager to come to terms with Abdul Hamid. This is a pact with the devil which, we believe, will be fatal to the movement. There is only one way that the Turkish Revolution will succeed, and this is by uniting all the popular forces of Turkey, without distinction of race or creed, around a truly revolutionary and democratic programme.

But is the Young Turk Party capable of forging such an alliance? Indeed, what is the social character of the Young Turk movement? The Turkish workers and rural masses are still under the influence of the clergy. The Muslim bourgeoisie, among whom the Young Turks have some sympathy, is insignificant. A long process of historical development has transformed the Turkish bourgeoisie into a military and bureaucratic caste, while the Christian bourgeoisie manages industry and commerce.

Thus the only milieu in which the Young Turks are popular is that of the army and the bureaucracy. These two elements can guarantee a revolution a success as swift as it is short-lived. But a clever manoeuvre on the part of the Sultan, calling to power the greatest possible number of Young Turks, can disorganise and compromise the whole movement.

The Young Turks could find solid support in the Christian bourgeoisie and proletariat, but will they have the foresight and moral courage to do so?

At the same time, they could carry the Muslim masses with them by a promise of serious reforms. The future will show us if they are capable of this. On their attitude will depend whether the Turkish revolution will merely paper over the cracks in the empire, or represent a movement pregnant with political and social consequences for the whole of humanity.

Dimitûr Blagoev

The Revolution in Turkey and Social Democracy²⁷

AS is known, the revolution in Turkey was the direct result of a military revolt that nobody expected would lead to a *coup d'état* in Turkey. At the very beginning of the rebellion started by Major Niyazi Efendi,²⁸ everybody saw it as a run-of-the-mill occurrence in the Turkish army, and expected its rapid suppression. But the matter turned out to be quite different. In fact, it involved a military *pronunciamento*, a military conspiracy, which managed to wrest power from the Sultan's camarilla through a *coup d'état*, and turn the government of Turkey from a despotic into a constitutional one. Such is the revolution in Turkey. However, that was the external aspect of the event. For us it is important to understand the nature of that revolution.

The most characteristic feature of the revolution in Turkey is that it was accomplished without any bloodshed or resistance from the old order and its sup-

27. Published in Sofia, 1908. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković.

28. See note 3 in the introduction to this section.

porters. This fact also speaks of the character of the revolution itself. On the other hand, the fact that the revolution was limited to the restoration of the Constitution of 1876²⁹ is also characteristic. This too shows the nature of the revolution in Turkey.

And indeed the leading actors in the Turkish revolution are the so-called Young Turk committees, consisting mainly of army officers (beyes),³⁰ pashas³¹ and imperial princes, relatives of the Sultan. They are all either sons of big landowners or are themselves landowners living off rents. A tiny minority of the members of the Young Turk committees come from other classes, like the commercial and industrial, which as a wholly Turkish class is still weak, and the Christian commercial and industrial class was distant from the Young Turk movement. However, the arbitrary and despotic character of the internal administration of Turkey made the position of the whole landowning class completely unbearable and endangered its interests. On the one hand, the capitalist development that Turkey had already begun to experience, the increasing penetration of European capital into its provinces, especially in Macedonia, the constant disorders and uprisings in these provinces, and the guerrilla struggles in Macedonia — all these, on the one hand, decisively threatened the position of the landowning class, and on the other, increasingly prompted capitalist Europe to interfere in the domestic affairs of Turkey, threatening it once and for all with expulsion from Europe.

It is clear from the above that the revolution in Turkey is a revolution of the Turkish feudal class against the Sultan's regime, which has proved no longer capable of defending its interests and ruling position in society, or of even guaranteeing its survival. But as the situation in Turkey was dangerous not only for the Turkish landowning class, but was also unbearable to the Christian nationalities, the revolution that broke out in Turkey met with universal sympathy and support amongst all these nationalities, and mainly amongst their bourgeoisie. And in this sense the revolution in Turkey can be termed a feudal-bourgeois revolution, whose bourgeois character is very weak, or is supported only insofar as the feudal class finds it necessary. But this support means that the bourgeois character of the revolution could in the future become more pronounced as a result of the participation of the other classes in the Turkish Empire, especially of the proletariat.

Above all, the revolution was supposed to save the empire, and thus the rule of the Turkish landowning class, and consolidate it through the direct participation of the latter in the government of the country, which meant limiting the absolute power of the Sultan, subordinating him to an 'Ottoman' constitution like that of 1876.

29. The constitution provided for an elected parliament, a bill of rights, an independent judiciary and considerable provincial decentralisation. But the Sultan retained the power to appoint ministers, convolve and prorogue parliament and prevent any bill from becoming law by refusing to ratify it.

30. Beys were governors of the districts and provinces of the empire. 'Bey' was also a title given to important officials and members of the ruling families, as well as a synonym for landowner.

31. 'Pasha' was a title given to governors and high military and naval officials.

This was the only goal that the Young Turk movement set itself. Even today, it has no other goals, and today it does not go beyond this goal. Moreover, the more it considers this goal accomplished, the more it renounces the revolution, and the harder it tries to hold back its development. The Young Turk party, which is in power today, is trying hard, on one hand, to still the revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie of the different nationalities in Turkey with fine phrases about liberty, equality and fraternity, and, on the other, to placate the boiling discontent of the awakening proletariat, which found expression in spontaneous mass strikes in Istanbul and throughout the country. Today it is trying its best to control the bourgeois revolutionary movements of the different nationalities in the Turkish Empire, as well as the spontaneous movements of the proletariat, for it wants to use these to consolidate its class rule and Turkish imperialist national and military ideals. In this way, the Young Turks are trying to hinder the development of the march of the revolution in Turkey.

Thus it is quite natural that the Young Turks reconciled themselves without much difficulty with the Sultan and his constitution; in other words, that the Turkish revolution has for now stopped half way. It is true that the Young Turks abandoned the revolution so as to avoid provoking foreign interference, especially in response to the overthrow of the Sultan. But it is precisely this that confirms our evaluation of the Young Turk revolutionary movement and its goals. If the latter were not a movement of the feudal class, a purely Turkish-patriotic and imperialistic movement; if it really was a movement of the rising revolutionary class, if it rested on the revolutionary forces of all the nations of the empire, and finally, if it was a movement for the transformation of Turkey from a feudal-Turkish-nationalistic state into a federative empire in which the autonomous self-government of all the national entities in the Balkans was realised — then no foreign interference could have opposed the revolution. It would have marched triumphantly to its goal. However, the Young Turk party has always been far from such revolutionary ideas, and it is still far from such ideas today. It is a Turkish nationalist party, which wants to subject all the other classes and nationalities to its class constitution in order to fulfil its goals.

The political ideals of the Young Turks do not go beyond the constitution of Midhat Pasha, that is, that of 1876, because it encapsulates their class aspirations. But, most of all, the constitution from 1876 does not recognise the existence of individual nations, it only recognises an 'Ottoman nation'. Naturally, it does not allow for autonomous self-government on the part of these nations, and therefore it does not permit their national self-determination as independent nations within the Turkish Empire. In other words, the constitution of 1876 recognises only one nation, one 'Ottoman nationality'; it is the old Turkish Empire in new garb; it is not a constitution appropriate to the federation of the different Balkan nationalities in one Balkan state, which is the only way of blocking the path to the plans for conquest of some of the Great Powers, like Russia and Austria.

On the basis of our argument, we can conclude that the Young Turk party, as the representative mainly of the ruling Turkish landowning class, will not go further than the constitution of 1876 and the ideal of a centralised 'Ottoman'

Empire under a constitutional monarchy. But at the same time, it has brought new revolutionary forces onto the political stage, and has opened the floodgates of revolution, a revolution which it is now trying to stop in its tracks. However, the further development and the outcome of the revolution will entirely depend on the involvement of the proletariat in it, on the extent to which it is a workers' revolution.

As for the attitude of the social democratic workers' groups in Macedonia and Thrace towards the struggles of the revolution, which are developing and will continue developing, is concerned, this is clear. The social democratic workers' groups will fight independently when trying to draw the working masses in the struggle, but shoulder to shoulder with the bourgeois revolutionary organisations against all attempts at counter-revolution by reactionary forces. However, at the same time they must never, for a single minute, stop raising the class consciousness of the workers by sharply emphasising to them the feudal-bourgeois character of the Young Turk revolutionary movement.

In order to be successful in their agitation and propaganda among the workers of Macedonia and Thrace, the social democratic workers' groups should base themselves on a number of minimum demands that are most pressing at the given moment and flow from it. In our view, at present these are the following:

1. The right of free self-determination for the nationalities living in the Turkish Empire and a federation of nations unified in one Balkan state.
2. Universal, direct, equal and secret suffrage for all elected bodies — the imperial parliament, the national popular assemblies, the regional and local councils.
3. Abolition of the senate.
4. Complete self-government for regions and local communities.
5. Full rights of workers' association.
6. Absolute freedom of conscience and belief, of speech, press and association.
7. Workers' legislation, including wide-ranging protection of the interests of the working class and especially of female and child labour in the factories, mines, workshops, agricultural estates, etc.
8. Secular education in the schools and instruction in the appropriate national language.
9. A people's militia instead of a standing army.
10. Abolition of taxes in kind, indirect taxes and the introduction of a progressive income and property tax.

These are the most important demands that the workers' social democratic groups in Macedonia and Thrace should emphasise at present in their agitation among the proletariat, and on which they should base their critique of the programmes of the bourgeois revolutionary movements in Turkey, as well as their own alternative in practice. Our comrades must always keep in mind that the proletariat can only become class-conscious more rapidly in the process of revolution, and that their task is to help the proletariat do it so as quickly as possible and place itself at the head of the revolution in order finally to clear the path to both its own liberation and that of society from the slavery brought

about by capitalist development. Only then will the revolution set off by the Young Turks be able to reach its real conclusion. But this requires vigorous, systematic, planned work on the part of the social democrats. It requires organising the working masses and ceaselessly imbuing them with socialist consciousness. This is the main task of our comrades in Macedonia and Thrace today, and only when it has been accomplished will they really be successful and revolutionaries in the true, socialist meaning of the word.

So we wish our comrades in Macedonia and Thrace the greatest possible success!

Long live the revolution! Long live the fighting proletariat in Turkey!

Dimo Hadzhi Dimov

Our Political Standpoint

The Principle of Autonomy, Regional Self-Government and The Balkan Federation³²

THE Centralists³³ in the Internal Organisation even now support as their *main and unique demand the autonomy of Macedonia and Adrianople* in spite of seeing that this demand is unrealisable, given the turn of events in the Turkish Empire. We will now examine this demand. IMRO, from its very beginning, set itself the goal of *autonomy for Macedonia and Thrace* for the reason that:

1. In the struggle to win political freedom, the Organisation would be isolated from the other nations of the empire, because its demands would not be accepted and would remain alien to the latter.
2. The Turkish nation would not develop intellectually and politically to such a degree, since by ignoring the imperative demands of the times it failed to see that it was only freedom that could protect the integrity of the empire and ensure its unity, and so would remain the fanatical upholder of absolutism, and remain an enemy of a genuinely free political life.
3. It did not think that matters in the Ottoman Empire would develop in such

32. From *Konstitutsionna Zarya*, 29 August-1 September 1908. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković. *Konstitutsionna Zarya* (Constitutional Dawn, 1908, Salonika) was the paper of Sandansky's Seres Revolutionary District of IMRO, one of the wings of the IMRO left, and edited by Dimo Hadzhi Dimov and Dimităr Mirazchiev.

33. 'Centralists' were previously designated members of IMRO (headed by its central committee) as opposed to adherents of the Supreme Committee in Sofia. But, as the IMRO left became known as 'decentralists' as they sought to base the movement on the masses, the term 'centralism' became linked with those who defended the traditional terrorist strategy of IMRO, that is, the right.

a way that not only the Turks, but also the other nations of the empire would fight for and champion the kind of freedom that we have today and that autonomous government could give us.

A few years ago — and even more so today — it became clear that all the reasons that had compelled the Organisation to set the autonomy of Macedonia and Thrace as its goal were no longer relevant. Consequently, the hopes that the Organisation had fostered in the intervention of the European powers and in the sympathy of the surrounding Balkan statelets disappeared.

If, during the most bloody period of the struggle, European diplomacy did not intervene in favour of radical reform in Macedonia and Adrianople, but contented itself with various insignificant reforms, Mürzsteg reforms and Reval³⁴ projects, then, given the present political freedoms in the empire, it cannot and should not, under any condition, have any moral right to intervene and support the Organisation's principle of autonomy.

The sympathy and support of the Balkan statelets for the Organisation's principle of autonomy is also unthinkable since the declarations from all parties of the ministers, statesmen and politicians of Sofia, Belgrade, Cetinje³⁵ and Athens have always demanded the establishment of conditions in Macedonia, Thrace and Kosovo that would ensure the freedom, political rights and cultural progress of their countrymen in the empire.³⁶

So much for external factors. As far as revolutionary organisations and democratic currents within the empire are concerned, none of them is going to support the principle of autonomy, not only for the Bulgarian people in Macedonia and Thrace, but also for the provinces where their compatriots live, as this would mean waving goodbye to the integrity and unity of the empire, in which lies precisely the guarantee that they will not fall under the political and economic oppression of some Great Power. If today national unity is hardly felt to guarantee the political and economic freedom of nations and the latter are compelled by force of circumstance to group themselves together in armies, alliances and into states, then it is even less in the interest of the Bulgarian nation in the empire to persist with the principle of autonomy.

In the last few years, the Seres and Strumitsa Revolutionary Districts of IMRO,³⁷ after taking into consideration the revolutionary discontent in the Ot-

34. In June 1908, the King of England and the Russian Tsar met at Reval on the Baltic. One of the results was a British proposal for Macedonian reform that would place the province under foreign control while retaining the fiction of Ottoman suzerainty. The rumour that the partition of the Ottoman Empire had been agreed at Reval directly sparked off the Young Turk revolution.

35. The capital of the Kingdom of Montenegro.

36. This is a confusing claim. Even if Dumov means that no Balkan politician wanted to see a genuinely independent Macedonian state, it is still not true. Bulgarian politicians regularly called for Macedonian autonomy as a step to a greater Bulgaria. Dumov exaggerates in order to establish his point that *objective developments* have rendered the idea of separation from Turkey unviable, if not reactionary.

37. Seres is now Serai in northern Greece (north of Thessaloniki). Strumitsa is now in eastern Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) near the border with Bulgaria.

toman Empire, its political development, the interests of all the nations and the real interests of the Bulgarian nation in particular, and the needs of the times, embraced the federal principle in relation to the foreign policy of the empire and provincial self-government in relation to its domestic system of rule.

Regional self-government within the empire, implemented according to the second main demand of the Draft Programme of the Organisation,³⁸ would preserve the centralisation of those state functions beyond the scope and powers of local authorities, and that could be fulfilled without detriment to the whole country or its separate parts, since under this dispensation the empire would be able to guarantee its integrity by extending broad freedoms and a wide scope for self-government. This in turn would fully guarantee the peoples the possibility of self-determination within the state, region and local community. According to the second demand of IMRO for *regional self-government*, the internal structure of the empire would be as follows: self-government for *districts* within regions; and for *local communities* within districts.

The Organisation's second demand also delimits which functions are consigned to the central government and which to regional and local self-government in the following manner: 'The central government of the Ottoman Empire — organised on the basis of a democratic constitutionalism — manages the common affairs and interests of the state (*foreign affairs, the army, finances, customs, railways, post and telegraphs*).' All the remaining state functions are consigned to regional and local bodies of self-government.

So apportioned, the functions of the central government and of regional self-government would guarantee self-determination for all the nations in the empire, their complete political, religious, educational and national freedom, and their cultural and economic progress, just as it would guarantee the unity and integrity of the empire, so vital to the struggle against all the forms of political and economic oppression that foreign countries practice and will continue to practice over the empire.

The Young Turk movement, which as a whole is evidently not ready to embrace this second demand of the Organisation, as it fears that it would violate the integrity of the empire, must come round to the opinion that only regional self-government can fully guarantee the unity of the empire, and that only it can give each nation the possibility of considering itself happier as part of the Ottoman Empire than separated from it, or attached to another state much weaker than the empire and with far fewer political and civic freedoms.

In spite of all the disillusionment that has come over the Christian population, and especially the Bulgarian people, due to the fact that the 'Union and Progress' Young Turk committee will not hear a single word spoken of regional self-government, we hold fast to our firm belief that the Turkish people, when

38. This was in fact the programme of the IMRO *left* (Seres, Strumitsa and Salonika districts), and was the work of the socialists in IMRO. Some writers attribute it to Pavel Deliradev (1877-1955), a Broad who had once been a Narrow, who was the ideologist of the Strumitsa district, and other writers to Duno Hadzhi Dimov.

presented with the opportunity to exercise its political judgement, will adopt the principle of self-government. *This principle will emerge as the bearer of a united struggle against the absolutist regime in Constantinople, and in this way will surprise not only us, but the entire world, and will gain the sincere sympathies of all Ottoman patriots and of progressive elements the world over and discover the real means of saving the fatherland from collapse. We will champion this principle not only as journalists, but also as people of the Organisation, since we are convinced that in it lies the only salvation for the integrity of the empire, the only guarantee for culture and progress, and no pressures or attacks, from whoever and wherever they come from, will be able to deflect us from this demand, to deprive us of the possibility of fulfilling our duty to our fatherland, as devoted and sincere patriots.*

Quite apart from all the benefits that a system of government for the Ottoman Empire on the basis of the Draft Programme of IMRO confers, it also gives us the possibility of putting into effect what has been and continues to be the main goal of our revolutionary programme.

The Balkan Federation

This idea of the association of the Turkish Empire and all the remaining Balkan statelets in one political and economic union, which would guarantee the political and economic freedom of each state through mutual concessions, strengthen industry, utilise all the natural resources and facilities for trade and commerce; stimulate the cultural progress of each of them, cease to spend large sums beyond the means of the people on militarism, and eliminate every cause for wars between them, whose only consequence is their material ruin and regression from civilised forms of government — this idea has been emblazoned on our revolutionary banner, will now also be most zealously propagandised by us, and will be our goal, not only as a revolutionary organisation, but also as a political party.

The *Balkan federation*, passionately defended by us up to now, was considered to be absurd by various elements in the Balkan states given Turkish absolutism with its bloody regime and the ruinous domestic policy of the empire. As genuine fighters for this idea, we always knew that the end of Turkish absolutism was fast approaching, and that it would soon go bankrupt and be replaced by a vigorous form of government, and we have struggled might and main to ensure that the broad mass of the inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula should embrace this idea which would save their political and economic independence.

Now that political freedom has been introduced to the empire, and that the time has come for everyone to champion his or her own political programme, we consider it our most pressing duty not only to declare our support for the Balkan federation to the public, but to strive our utmost for its acceptance by the peoples of the Balkan states, as regional self-government, which is the only guarantee for a Balkan federation, will be embraced by all the patriots in the Ottoman Empire.

We appeal to the intellectuals in the Kingdom of Bulgaria who have not been corrupted by crude partisan bias and fervour, and we appeal to the whole

Bulgarian people, with the exception of those who see in the misfortunes and woes of the Bulgarian people only a means to personal gain. May the honest intellectuals take up and pursue a policy of reason, a policy that will strengthen the cultural unity of the Bulgarian people, a policy that will perpetuate peace and calm on the Balkan Peninsula! We appeal precisely to this part of the Bulgarian people, and we call on it to reflect on the future of all the Balkan statelets, including the empire, and to consider all the benefits that a *Balkan federation* could bring to the Balkans. We hope that this part of the Bulgarian people, which was always distinguished by its sober reasoning, will listen to us and embrace the ideal of the *Balkan federation*, and in this way help us to secure our regional self-government, which, if it is now being disputed, is due to the fear of the territorial aspirations of official Bulgaria. Will we be heard and understood, will the present political moment be grasped with sufficient clarity, and could this be the beginning of brotherly coexistence amongst the Balkan states and the empire, as has happened amongst various peoples of the empire? Determination, reason and honest work have made the impossible possible in the empire, a brotherhood amongst nations that until yesterday were annihilating one another, and they will re-establish friendly relations between the Balkan states.

The Balkan Federation and the Workers³⁹

A *BALKAN federation* means the creation of a state from the peoples that populate the Balkan Peninsula in which all the nations have equal rights. Thus, for example, if European Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Romania united to form one state in which all would enjoy equal rights — this would be a *Balkan federation*.

The idea of the creation of a Balkan federation out of the Balkan peoples is not new. At one time, the Balkan federation was the standard of the Radicals in Serbia.⁴⁰ Before the liberation of Bulgaria, the most eminent Bulgarian revolutionaries proselytised the idea of a Balkan federation. However, the idea of a Balkan federation has really emerged after the coup in Turkey.

Today, the idea of the Balkan federation is most of all advocated by the Se-

39. *Robotnicheska Iskra*, 15 March 1909. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković. The first editor of *Robotnicheska Iskra* (*Workers' Spark*, 1909-11) was Vasil Glavinov (1869-1929), the pioneer of socialism in Macedonia.

40. The Serbian Radical Party, founded in 1881 by the followers of the socialist Svetozar Marković, waged a bitter struggle against the Obrenović despotism, laying the basis for constitutional government in Serbia after 1903. By this time, it had become the party of government, and in this capacity was to lead Serbia to victory in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

cial Democrats as the only true means of protecting the autonomy and independence of the Balkan peoples, of achieving their national unification and of establishing the best conditions for their progress and development. And indeed a Balkan federation would establish a great Balkan state that would protect the national independence of the peoples that would constitute it, and in this way would obtain the most important conditions enabling their economic and political development, because such a state would offer up a wide terrain for the rapid development of their productive forces. However, today non-socialists also portray themselves as being for the Balkan federation, for example, the people from the People's Federative Party around the paper, *Narodnya Volya*.⁴¹ However, they only appear to be for it, mainly just to be able to offer some kind of opposition to the followers of the Clubs,⁴² who, of course, do not want to hear a single word spoken of the Balkan federation, as they are pure Bulgarian 'patriots'. As for how they understand the Balkan federation and the means for realising, creating it — about this, like all the other petit-bourgeois crackpots that present themselves as its supporters, the followers of *Narodnya Volya* are completely silent.

The *Balkan federation* is only possible as a *democratic Balkan republic*. But, precisely for this reason, none of the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois parties in the Ottoman Empire are fighting for such a Balkan federation, and are never going to fight for one. And indeed, neither the Young Turks nor the Ottoman Liberal Party⁴³ intend to fight for a Balkan federation. On the contrary, both are bigoted Ottoman nationalists, or, to be precise, are imbued with old-Turk Ottoman ideas. And these are the two most influential and powerful parties in the Ottoman Empire, and their ideals exclude any thought of a Balkan federation.

However, the parties of the other nationalities in the Ottoman Empire are also far from this same idea as they too represent the aspirations and desires of classes that neither understand nor are capable of understanding the idea of the Balkan federation. Let us take, for example, the party of the Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs,⁴⁴ or the party associated with *The People's Will*. The first is the party of the merchant-industrialist and the usurer-entrepreneur class, or of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie in Macedonia and Thrace; the second is the party of the class

41. The People's Federative Party (Bulgarian Section) was the party of the IMRO left in 1909-10, but led by a group of Bulgarian, ex-Narrow, Broad socialist intellectuals. It defended revolutionary Ottoman patriotism, and in 1909 sent volunteers to fight the counter-revolution in Constantinople. Its paper, *The People's Will* (1909-10) was edited by Angel Tomov, a member of the (Jewish) Workers' Federation of Salonika (1909-18) and Dimanur Vlahov (1878-1953), Secretary of the PFP and its parliamentary deputy.

42. The Union of Bulgarian Constitutional Clubs (1908-1910) was the party of the IMRO right wing and the Macedonian-Bulgarian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. More or less hostile to the revolution, it adopted a wait-and-see policy, while remaining in close contact with Sofia.

43. *Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası*, led by Prince Sabaheddin (1877-1948), a member of the royal family and former Young Turk. It advocated decentralisation of the empire and in the area of foreign policy, a Balkan confederation. It was probably the instigator of the counter-revolution of April 1909, which it was unable to control, and threatened to go beyond their limited aim of overturning the Young Turk dictatorship, until it was crushed by the Young Turks.

44. See note 42 above.

of petty artisans and peasants. But both these classes were permeated, and with the new constitutional era today are that much more permeated, with pure Bulgarian nationalism, that is to say, with the nationalism of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie in general, which has a great influence over the petit-bourgeoisie. Precisely because of this, even when they present themselves as supporters of the Balkan federation, these two bourgeois parties can never be fighters for the Balkan federation, as the classes, interests and aspirations which they represent will never join the fight for it.

What has been said of the Bulgarian bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties in Macedonia and Thrace also concerns the parties of the other nationalities in the same provinces. We witness endless savage nationalist struggles that are incited and supported by precisely these parties, and are based on the same classes on which the Bulgarian parties are based. And it is from these parties that the various Hamids, Coburgs, Karageorgeviches, Carols and other sultans, kings and emperors on the Balkan Peninsula, who naturally oppose and will continue to oppose any Balkan federation, draw their strength.⁴⁵ Other forces and foreign states, that similarly have no interest in the realisation of the Balkan federation, draw their strength from the same parties.

The *Balkan federation* can only be realised by a *revolution*. But it is already clear from the above that neither the bourgeois nor the petit-bourgeois classes will join such a revolution. And the 'Young Turk' revolution has ended with the passing of power into the hands of the landowning class and its party. It will not go any further, except insofar as it will increasingly declare itself against the revolution. And then who will put the revolution back on its feet and create the Balkan federation?

It is clear that the revolution and the realisation of the Balkan federation can only be accomplished by a *proletariat that is conscious and powerful, and by a revolutionary social democratic party*. That's why solving the task of the Balkan federation will only be possible when the proletariat of all the Balkan states organises itself separately from the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties, into an *independent class organisation*, imbued with the teachings of its class, and with a *socialist spirit*. It is vital for the cause of the Balkan federation that the workers in Turkey, that is, the Ottoman proletariat, achieve this.

There is no doubt that the proletariat in the Balkans, and in the Ottoman Empire in general, will only become a force capable of solving this task — and of pulling towards it all those elements from the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie responsive to such ideas — at a higher stage of capitalist society. Because, if today the idea of the Balkan federation looks unrealisable, the reason for it lies in the economic backwardness of the Balkan peoples.

45. The Saxe-Coburg-Gotha dynasty ruled Bulgaria during 1887-1946. Prince Karl of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was crowned King Carol I of Romania (1866-1914), the dynasty continued as rulers of Romania until 1947. The Karadordevic dynasty ruled Serbia during 1842-58 and 1903-45.

The Nationalist Struggles and Socialism⁴⁶

THE struggles of the various nationalities here in Turkey continued even after the *Hurriyet*.⁴⁷ These struggles were and are most murderous in the European vilayets, and chiefly in Macedonia. And today, just as before the *Hurriyet*, a savage struggle of irreconcilable hatreds is being waged between Greeks and Bulgarians, between Bulgarians and Serbs, between Vlachs and Greeks, etc.

There is not a shadow of doubt that the domestic nationalist struggles are exceptionally harmful for the whole empire. They were the cause and pretext for the consolidation of the Hamidian despotism and for its perpetuation over the course of 30 years, just as for the constant interference of foreign states in the internal affairs of Turkey. Today they present not only a barrier for the proper development of the empire, but also a great danger for its future and its very existence. And that is why today our rulers, that is to say, the Young Turks, are putting all their efforts into forestalling this danger. Will they be able, however, to ward off this evil?

There are naïve people here at home who think that national enmities can be overcome through consistent appeals to the quarrelling parties to renounce their hatred and embrace the new, universal nationalism and patriotism of the Young Turks, that is, the Ottoman national ideal. But the nationalist struggles can never be eliminated by these means. As long as the Bulgarian Empire,⁴⁸ the Greek, Serbian and Romanian kingdoms exist, and as long as, on the other hand, there are states like Austria, Germany, England and Italy that openly wish to extend their markets into Turkey, into Macedonia, and those like Russia that seek to control the keys to the Black Sea; as long as our rulers make use of the policy of old Turkey that continues even today — the nationalist struggles in Macedonia will never cease.

And the truth is that whatever the Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian and Romanian nationalists and their parties in Macedonia say, they will never renounce their nationalism or national patriotism. Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Romania can never, under any circumstances, fail to support their national aspirations in Macedonia, because to do so would mean renouncing their right to life and their very existence. On the other hand, the Great Powers interested in Turkish markets, especially Austria and Germany, who are preparing themselves to fall upon Salonika and Asia Minor, will never abandon their policy, and for this reason will

46. *Rabotnicheska Iskra* (*Workers' Spark*), 15 July 1909. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković.

47. *Hurriyet* in Turkish means 'freedom', and thus here the proclamation of the constitutional era in Turkey.

48. Bulgaria declared itself an empire on proclaiming its independence from Turkey in October 1908.

always exploit national rivalries and will incite them to the point of irreconcilable hatred in order to hold our rulers in complete dependence, and prevent 'the sick man' (Turkey) from ever recovering.

But the greatest tragedy of all is that our very own rulers, that is, the Young Turks, are employing the old tactic of fanning national hatreds. They ostensibly strive to eliminate the latter, but in reality the work of their parliament until now leads precisely to the perpetuation of national hatreds. Such is the case with the law on the Church school question in Macedonia;⁴⁹ and with the amendments made to the constitution that prohibit associations and parties with national aims. Firstly, instead of eliminating national rivalries, they strengthen them even more. With the banning of organisations with nationalist aims, parliament evidently wishes to remove the possibility of establishing nationalist parties, thinking that this will turn them into Ottomans, and that it will weld them into a single all-Ottoman unit. Our rulers pursue the same goal with the law on education in the empire. However, this whole policy leads precisely to results contrary to those intended. In fact, it awakens nationalist aspirations, and gives the neighbouring states a pretext to intensify their nationalist aspirations and rivalries. In this way, the policy of our rulers comes down to distracting our attention away from the fundamental reforms that really can establish the conditions for the correct development of the state, and keeping us occupied with nationalist problems, which it fuels under a new guise.

It is obvious that, given the above conditions, appeals and bombastic speeches for equality and fraternity amongst all nationalities will not make them give up their nationalist struggles and merge with the Ottoman nationalist stream. This will not only fail to eliminate nationalist rivalries, but, on the contrary, will merely fuel them. Only the working class, by becoming class-conscious and through its struggle, can overcome nationalist conflicts in Turkey. In reality, nationalist hatreds here find their greatest support among the workers. For here in the big cities, and chiefly in places where political life is most vigorous, the working class makes up the majority of the people. However, they lack class-consciousness, and they are imbued with the same nationalist prejudices as their masters. The workers are members of the nationalist parties of their masters. If our workers separated from these parties, organised independently and fought for their class and its ideals, then nationalist struggles would lose their intensity, and even their basis in life. But for the working class to become a class for itself and fight independently, it must become class-conscious, and this means embracing the socialist ideal, socialism. And that is why it is socialism that will help get rid of nationalist rivalries among us. The more the workers become imbued with socialism — and this means class-consciousness — the sooner the basis of nationalist struggles among us will be eroded.

49. The Young Turks sought to centralise the education system by creating a system of inspection to oversee the largely Church-administered schools of the non-Muslim nationalities, and by imposing the teaching of Turkish in the schools at all levels. The aim was to 'Ottomanise' (that is, Turkify) non-Muslims.

A splendid example of how the class struggle of the workers cuts the ground from under nationalist struggles is the workers' meeting in Salonika,⁵⁰ and the protest meetings of workers organisations in all the larger working-class urban centres against the law on trade unions and strikes.⁵¹ Strikes demonstrate the same thing. In all these cases, the workers of various nations and faiths forget about national differences and conduct a common struggle. But, despite all this, our workers' movement still lacks class-consciousness. This is why workers forget their national and religious differences only briefly as a result of some common misfortune. Thus, they still do not have their own independent class parties, and so their struggle is still not a class struggle; the working class has still not become conscious of itself as a class for itself. Socialist propaganda and agitation, the spreading of socialism, of the socialist teaching is necessary precisely here. Socialism will elevate the working class from a class in itself to an organised class that will once and for all pull the rug from under the destructive nationalist struggles that are waged today by various bourgeois-patriotic parties and which poison the minds of the working class. To conclude — Long live socialism among the workers!

50. On 19 June 1909, a demonstration called by the Workers' Federation of Salonika saw 6000 Salonika workers march against the law on trade unions and strikes.

51. Trade unions were banned in the public sector, compulsory arbitration was introduced, and strike action was made extremely difficult.

V: The Annexation of Bosnia by Austria- Hungary in 1908

International Socialism and the Right to National Self- Determination

Introduction

AT the Congress of Berlin of 1878, following Turkey's defeat by Russia in the war of 1877-78, the Great Powers agreed to the military occupation of the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (plus the Sandjak of Novi Pazar)¹ by Austria-Hungary to counterbalance the establishment of an autonomous Bulgaria under Russian control. Although Bosnia remained nominally Ottoman, in reality the region became an Austro-Hungarian colony, and a byword for repression. By 1908, however, the relatively strong position Austria-Hungary had held in the Balkans since 1878 was under threat. In particular, Serbia had freed itself from 25 years of Austrian semi-colonial domination when the pro-Habsburg Obrenović monarchy was overthrown in 1903, and replaced by the pro-Russian Karadjordjević dynasty. Given the large Serb population of Bosnia,² not to mention the Slav peoples of the Empire more generally, the example of Serbia was seen by the Habsburgs as a challenge to the Empire's prestige, if not to its very existence.

Determined to re-establish the Monarchy's position in the Balkans, Baron Aehrenthal³ was appointed Austrian foreign minister in October 1906. His strat-

1. The strip of land that then separated the newly-independent Serbia from Montenegro — and thus from the Adriatic Sea. It also linked Bosnia to the rest of Turkey's Empire in Europe.
2. The population of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1910 was approximately 850 000 Serbs (42 per cent), 650 000 Muslims (34 per cent) and 400 000 Croats (21 per cent). See Robert A. Kann *The Multinational Empire*, Volume 2 (Columbia University Press, 1950), p.304.
3. Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854-1912) was Austrian foreign minister during 1906-12.

egy was essentially one of expansion eastwards, as and when the opportunity arose, into the imperial vacuum created by the progressive retreat of Turkey-in-Europe. In January 1908, Aehrenthal secured permission from Turkey to build a railway link from Bosnia through the Sandjak of Novi Pazar to Kosovo, from where the existing railway line ran directly to the Turkish port of Salonika on the Aegean Sea (today Greek Thessalonica).⁴ Then, on 5 October 1908, with the Ottoman Empire weakened by the turmoil of the Young Turk Revolution of July, Aehrenthal proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, provoking an international crisis that threatened to engulf the Balkans in war, if not Europe as a whole.

The annexation crisis revealed significant differences between the Austrian⁵ and Serbian social democrats. Although they both opposed it, the Austrians studiously avoided raising the right to national self-determination for Bosnia out of a fear that such a demand would have negative implications for the Habsburg Empire's integrity, which they were keen to preserve. By contrast, the Serbs supported Bosnia's right to self-determination by plebiscite.

The position adopted by the Austrian social democrats was the natural consequence of their policy on the national question within the Monarchy. At their conference in Brünn in 1899 (today, Brno in the Czech Republic), the Austrians adopted a policy of reorganising the Habsburg Empire into a democratic federation of nations based on ethnic territories with national autonomy.⁶ This was a thoroughly reformist strategy, and in no sense a revolutionary one. Indeed, the party consciously set itself up as the sole true defender of the Empire's integrity, stopping only to cloak that defence in internationalist garb. As Karl Kautsky, himself of Austro-Czech origin, wrote in 1898, Austrian Social Democracy 'as an international party' had to oppose national conflicts by advocating 'in Austria a policy which upholds the Empire in its entirety and fights against everything that would lead to its disintegration'.⁷ In what was already a German-Austrian-led party,⁸ which held fast to the orthodoxy that Russia was, as in Marx's day,

4. Railways in the peninsula were the subject of intense imperial rivalry at the time. Russia wanted to build a Danube-Adriatic railway, which Serbia supported. Italy wanted to extend the Salonika railway to Vlorë on the Albanian Adriatic coast. The significance of these plans bears comparison with present-day plans to construct trans-Balkan oil pipelines.

5. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party was entirely separate from the Austrian.

6. See Kann, *The Multinational Empire*, Volume 2, op cit, p155 for the main points of the programme. By remaining silent on what powers the autonomes would have, the final programme had disagreement between the centralist Austrian Germans, who wanted to limit autonomy to cultural matters only, and the Czechs and Poles, who wanted to extend them to economic ones.

7. 'Nochmals der Kampf der Nationalitäten in Österreich' ['Once Again on the Struggle of Nationalities in Austria'], *Die Neue Zeit*, no 23, 1898. This was preceded by Kautsky's original article 'Der Kampf der Nationalitäten und das Staatsrecht in Österreich' ['The Struggle of Nationalities and State Right in Austria'], *Die Neue Zeit*, nos 17-18, 1897. These articles provoked a debate and had an important influence on the Brünn programme.

8. GDH Cole observed of the Austrian Party that 'its leadership was mainly German, its thought and its culture were German, it was subject to powerful influences from the larger German Socialist Party beyond the frontiers of the Austrian Empire. Its very conception of what a So-

the evil empire *par excellence*, and thus that Austria-Hungary had to be preserved as an essential bulwark against it, the policy of national autonomy served in practice to reinforce German-centrist tendencies among Austrian social democrats and feed submissive accommodation to the Habsburg ruling class.⁹

When confronted with the annexation in 1908, the party's opposition to it was not only confined to parliamentary speeches and resolutions. It was also circumscribed in advance by the narrow framework of the Brünn programme. Its leader, Viktor Adler,¹⁰ lamely resorted to demanding a democratic constitution for Bosnia within the Empire in the party's official parliamentary resolution on the crisis, a demand that amounted to *de facto* recognition of the annexation. One historian has summarised the Austrian party's position thus: 'At no time did the Socialists advocate full self-determination for the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for they believed that such a programme would weaken the Habsburg monarchy and open the way for further Russian intervention in the Balkans.'¹¹

The first article in this Section, 'Austria's Foreign Policy and Social Democracy', which appears here in an edited form, was written by Otto Bauer, one of Austro-Marxism's leading theoreticians of the national question, in October 1907. Bauer's major work on the national problem, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, had appeared in that year, in which he reaffirmed the guiding principle of party policy that 'national autonomy must necessarily be the programme of all nations, classes, and parties that have an interest in the survival of Austria'.¹² Bauer's article accurately represents dominant feeling in the party

cialist party ought to be was a German conception, modified to suit the conditions of a multinational State...' (*A History of Socialist Thought: Volume 3, Part 2 — The Second International 1889-1914* (London, 1956), p520)

9. The strong parliamentary progress of Austrian Social Democracy was ironically regarded by the Monarchy 'as a gain for the state' because of the party's ideological rôle as a unifying force. This led to talk of so-called *Burg* (Court) socialism. See Oscar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, 1961), p177.
10. Viktor Adler (1852-1918) was the leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party from 1888 and founder of *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in 1889. He later supported Austria-Hungary during the First World War.
11. Ruth D Roebke-Berens, 'Austrian Social Democratic Foreign Policy and the Bosnian Crisis of 1908', *Austrian History Yearbook*, Volumes 17-18, 1981-1982, pp104-23. See also her *Austrian Social Democratic Thought on the Nationality Question and Foreign Policy 1890-1914* (unpublished PhD thesis, Marquette University, 1976).
12. Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p403. This is the first translation into English of this work. (It should be noted that Bauer was opposed to the Brünn programme's territorial division of the Monarchy on ethnic lines. Taking his cue from Karl Renner, Bauer argued that national cultural autonomy should be based on 'the personality principle', that is, treated as a non-territorial personal matter — like affiliation to a religion — which could be expressed through national cultural societies set up anywhere.) In recent years, some Marxists have turned to Bauer's work for guidance on how to resolve national strife. See Claudie Weill, *L'Internationale et l'autre* (Paris, 1987) and Michael Löwy, *Fatherland or Mother Earth?* (London, 1998). But dazzled by Bauer's theory of national autonomy, few have stopped to consider where his commitment to the territorial integrity of the Habsburg Empire led him and others *in practice*. Take his hostility to Hungarian independence and the left gloss he gave to support for the Habsburg Crown sending 'its army

on Austria's relations with the Balkans prior to the annexation. Three points stand out: firstly, Bauer's claim that the Balkan nations could have been drawn into the Empire and their national aspirations satisfied *within* it if only a policy of free trade and national cultural autonomy had been adopted, a position that amounted to little more than a cultural version of Aehrenthal's imperial expansionism; secondly, that the working class supported the Monarchy's alliance with Germany because it guaranteed peace in Europe against Russia; and thirdly, that Tsarism was still the most dangerous enemy of democracy. Bauer's failure to treat Austria-Hungary as an imperialist state is revealed in a telling footnote on Eduard Bernstein, the German social democrat who had recently advocated a socialist colonial policy and had praised the Habsburg colonial administration in Bosnia. Rather than attack Bernstein's colonialism, Bauer instead flatly denies that Bosnia is a colony like British India or the Belgian Congo.

Bauer's position lies in stark contrast with the next article in this section, 'Austria-Hungary in the Balkans', by arguably the most important Marxist ever to have come out of Serbia, Dimitrije Tucović. Written in February 1908, eight months before the annexation, following Aehrenthal's announcement of the construction of the Sandjak railway, Tucović sees the railway plan as the expression of Austro-Hungarian imperial designs on the Balkans, and as the prelude to territorial expansion into the peninsula. Where Bauer continued to see Russia as the greatest danger in the Balkans, Tucović argues that relations in the Balkans had changed since Marx's day by pointing out that since the Congress of Berlin, when Austria occupied Bosnia, the Habsburg Empire had become the foremost imperial threat in the region. And where Bauer saw Austria's alliance with Germany as a peaceful bulwark against Russia, Tucović astutely observes that two imperialist blocs — Germany, Austria and Turkey on the one hand, and Britain, France and Russia on the other — had formed, neither of which could recommend themselves to the working class.¹³

Tucović was studying in Berlin when he wrote 'Austria-Hungary in the Balkans'. He unsuccessfully tried to get his article published in *Vorwärts*, the daily newspaper of the German Social Democratic Party. In his letter of 7 February 1908 to his Serbian party comrade Dragiša Lapčević, which appears next in this section, Tucović writes of his distress at the refusal to publish the article. Acknowledging with resignation his own powerlessness in the circumstances, he nevertheless provides a lucid analysis of the anti-Russian obsession in the German party that lay behind the article's rejection. It finally appeared in *Radnička Novine*, the Serbian party's daily, on 20 February.

into Hungary in order to reconquer it for the empire, but it will inscribe upon its flags: Uncorrupted universal and equal suffrage! Right of coalition for the agricultural workers! National autonomy! It will oppose the idea of the independent Hungarian nation-state with the idea of the *United States of Great Austria*' (Ibid, p345) Here lies the theory of national autonomy revealed as the practice of national oppression; here sits Austro-Marxism in the saddle behind the Habsburg Crown!

13. Bauer's article had just been serialised in the Serbian paper, *Radnička Novine*, on 10, 12, 15 and 17 January 1908.

The Serbian Social Democratic Party was much preoccupied with the Bosnian question in the run-up to the annexation in 1908. In August, determined to protest against the repression of the workers' movement there, and to draw attention to the colonial nature of Austrian rule, the party sent a *Memorandum on the Political Situation of the Workers' Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina* to the International Socialist Bureau, the headquarters of the Second International. As Tucović said at the Central Committee meeting which decided to draft the *Memorandum*, it was primarily directed at the Austrian social democrats, so that their party 'would not have to get its information from the bought-off Viennese press, and could clearly see Austria-Hungary's desire to colonise the Balkans'.¹⁴ The Croatian social democrats of the Habsburg Empire were invited to sign the *Memorandum*, but they refused. Their leader, Vitomir Korać,¹⁵ met the Serbian party leadership in July, when he maintained that conditions in Bosnia were not so bad as they claimed. To Tucović's argument that Bosnia had to win autonomy and a parliament, Korać tellingly replied: 'Bosnia will never obtain any kind of autonomy until it is annexed to Austria.'¹⁶

The annexation of 5 October 1908 was greeted in Serbia by mass nationalist demonstrations, and the heightened tensions led Austria-Hungary and Serbia to the brink of war.

On 9 October, the next article in this section, entitled 'War?', appeared as a leader in *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the daily newspaper of the Austrian social democrats.¹⁷ In his autobiography, *My Life*, Leon Trotsky recounted:

During my meetings with the Balkan Socialists — one of whom was Dmitry Tutsovitch [Dimitrije Tucović] who later was killed as an officer in the Balkan War — I had heard indignant complaints to the effect that all the Serbian bourgeois press was quoting the chauvinist outbursts of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* with a malicious delight, in proof of the fact that the international solidarity of workers was no more than a fraudulent tale.¹⁸

The focus and tone of 'War?' is a clear example of one such chauvinist outburst.

14. Dimitrije Tucović, *Subramo Dela* [Collected Works] (Belgrade, 1975), Volume 2, p165.
15. Vitomir Korać (1877-1941), the leader of Croatian social democrats, was in fact a Habsburg Serb. He became minister in the first postwar Yugoslav government, and thereafter a leading member of the small, reformist Yugoslav Socialist Party.
16. Enver Redić, *Autonomizam i jugoslovenska pitanja* [Autro-Marxism and the South Slav Question] (Belgrade, 1977), p380.
17. We have not been able to establish the authorship of this leader, but it was probably either Friedrich Austerlitz (1862-1931), editor of *Arbeiter-Zeitung* from 1895 to 1931, or Karl Leuthner (1869-1944), foreign affairs editor from 1897 to 1934, notorious for his social imperialist views. Trotsky recounts that when he wrote a 'very cautious and tempered article' attacking Leuthner, a furious Otto Bauer confronted him with this revealing outburst, 'What importance have Leitner's [Leuthner's] articles?... Foreign policy does not exist for Austria-Hungary. No worker ever reads about it. It has not the slightest importance.' (Leon Trotsky, *My Life*, London, 1975, p218) Trotsky's article was 'Nationalpsychologie oder klassenkampf?' [National Psychology or Class Struggle?], *Die Neue Zeit*, Volume 27, Part 1, 1908-09.
18. *My Life*, op cit, pp217-8.

Instead of attacking the annexation, the writer arrogantly ridicules Serbia and rejects its right to protest on the basis that it was not a signatory to the Treaty of Berlin of 1878! This overriding imperialist tone is tempered only in the last two paragraphs by some criticism of Aehrenthal.

On the very same day, the Serbian party's first public statement of its position, written by Tucović and entitled 'What We Say', also appeared in *Radničke Novine*. Here Tucović demands the right to self-determination by plebiscite for Bosnia, and provides an incisive survey of imperialism as a global system of capitalist oppression and exploitation, of which the Austro-Hungarian Empire is treated as an integral part. At the same time, he rejects Serbian militarism as the road to liberation, and argues for resistance based on popular struggle from below by the Bosnians themselves.

The Serbian socialists were deeply dismayed by the attitude of the Austrian party on Bosnia. In 1910, true to the Serbian party's policy of addressing cross-party disagreements privately,¹⁹ Tucović took up the dispute at the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International, the first held since the annexation. There Tucović attacked the Austrian party for failing to stand up for the rights of small nations. The leading Austrian social democrat, Karl Renner, replied, claiming that the party had opposed the annexation by standing up for Bosnian autonomy, and had been neither on the side of Austria nor Serbia in the crisis. But where Tucović clearly understood Bosnian autonomy to mean exercise of the right to self-determination by plebiscite, Renner understood it altogether differently to mean autonomy only *within* the confines of the Habsburg Empire, a position that effectively emasculated any real opposition to the annexation.²⁰ It is not difficult to see why Friedrich Adler later said of Renner that for him 'the Austrian state is the highest principle'.²¹ The speeches of Tucović and Renner at Copenhagen appear below, and bring this section to a close.

The position of Austrian Social Democracy during the annexation of Bosnia demonstrates how their identification with the territorial integrity of the Habsburg Empire and their refusal to support the right of national self-determination to the point of secession if so desired bred and reinforced reformist ac-

19. There were departures from this policy. Central Committee member Života Djurković (?-1914) published a book about Bosnia in French attacking the Austrian social democrats. See Živ N Dyourkovitch, *Bosnie et Herzégovine* (Belgrade, 1908). Dušan Popović criticised Djurković for going public on the delicate question of relations between the parties of the Second International. See Dušan Popović, *Sabramo Delo [Collected Works]* (Belgrade, 1975), pp.349-50. Yet Popović wrote a long 'Letter from Serbia' also criticising the Austrian and German social democrats in *La Pev-pel*, the paper of the Belgian social democrats in November 1908 (ibid, pp.274-83).

20. Despite this, Tucović does not appear to have grasped that his ultimate vision of national autonomy as the basis of a post-revolutionary Balkan federation was quite different from the Austro-Marxist advocacy of national autonomy in order to preserve the Habsburg Empire by reforming it. That the battle lines between reform and revolution were not clear to him can be seen from the fact that he reviewed Renner's works on the national question favourably for Serbian readers well after 1908.

21. Uttered by Friedrich Adler (1879-1960), son of party leader, Viktor, at his trial for assassinating the Habsburg Prime Minister in 1916. Unlike his father, Friedrich was anti-war. See Charles A Gulick, *Austria: From Habsburg to Hitler*, Volume 2 (Berkeley, 1948), p.1372.

commodation to the Habsburg ruling class and state. The Austro-Marxist idea of national autonomy adopted at Brünn was deceptively attractive on the level of theory. In practice, however, it led Austrian Social Democracy into a tacit alliance with the Habsburgs and, ultimately, into support for the First World War. In the end, as one historian has bluntly noted: 'German nationalism triumphed over the democratic ideal of national self-determination.'²² After the Monarchy's collapse in 1918, however, both Karl Renner and Otto Bauer became enthusiastic supporters of German-Austrian national self-determination in the form of *Anschluss* with Germany.²³ This pan-German element to their thinking led Renner publicly to advocate a yes vote in Hitler's plebiscite on *Anschluss* with Nazi Germany in April 1938, while Bauer gave his approval from exile shortly before his death.²⁴

By contrast, the Serbian social democrats, by supporting Bosnia's right to self-determination by plebiscite, put themselves in a position to oppose the imperialist act of annexation without succumbing to the aggrandising nationalism propagated by their own ruling class. Bosnia's fate, they argued, should be determined by the Bosnians and by them alone. As we shall see, the party was thus able to avoid infection by the nationalist virus, and in 1914, as the Habsburgs mobilised against Serbia, unlike its Austrian sister party, it stood firm in opposition to imperialist war.

Dragan Plavšić

Otto Bauer Austria's Foreign Policy and Social Democracy²⁵

TWO great principles determine the attitude of the working class to the problems of foreign policy. Firstly, the working class demands that foreign policy should be put at the service of an economic policy that encourages the

22. Roebke-Berens, *Austrian Social Democratic Foreign Policy and the Bosnian Crisis of 1908*, op cit, p123.

23. Bauer's conversion to support for the right of national self-determination came only after it became obvious that the Habsburg Empire was doomed, as he admitted in his *The Austrian Revolution* (London, 1925), p31. Trotsky later wrote: 'That programme which during the preceding decades should have inspired the struggle of the proletariat against the Hapsburgs and the ruling bourgeoisie was now brought in as the instrument of self-preservation for the nation which had dominated yesterday, but was to-day in danger from the liberated Slavic peoples...' (Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, London, 1977, p911)

24. Bauer argued that the wheel of history could not be turned back. See his 'Österreichs Ende', *Der Kampf*, April 1938.

25. From *Der Kampf*, 1 January 1908. Translated from the German by Mike Jones.

growth of industry, increases opportunities for work, and facilitates and cheapens our supply of food and raw materials. Secondly, the working class demands a peace policy. If the working class everywhere fights against every bellicose policy of conquest, how much more must it do so in Austria, which can never conduct a people's war? This is because Austria cannot conduct a war that would force whole nations into fratricidal battle with their compatriots. Absolutist Austria, which does not allow the people to decide on war and peace, whose military organisation has reduced the youth of the nation to a mere tool in alien hands, may be able to conduct wars; a democratic Austria can pursue no other policy but that of peace.

Since Königsgrätz and Sedan,²⁶ the foreign policy of the Monarchy has essentially been a Balkan policy. The changing fortunes of the Balkan peoples stand in close reciprocal relation with changes in our foreign policy. Therefore let us first look briefly at the South-Eastern lands, churned up by numerous bloody battles, on which so many decisions about our future rest!

In the South-East, a mighty process of radical change has for a century been continuously and irresistibly taking place. Greece, Romania and Serbia have long since thrown off the Turkish yoke; Bosnia and Egypt, Bulgaria and Eastern Rumania, Crete and Cyprus remain tied to the empire of the Sultan by the loosest bonds. In Macedonia and Old Serbia,²⁷ revolt has been raging for years. To be sure, the mass of the peasantry still bear the yoke of the Turkish masters passively. But the narrow educated stratum, the numerous immigrants who have come to know a better administration and judicial system in the Christian states, a tiny and yet to them so significant portion of Western culture, on their return home long for liberation from Turkish rule. Without doubt, the revolt of the Slav peasants against their Turkish masters and the Greek Church represents the first stage of development of that great process by which a subjugated people raises itself to a new cultural existence, a process entwined with the whole economic and social development of our time, which I have attempted to describe as the awakening of the non-historic nations.²⁸ However, notwithstanding the rougher and less developed form that it takes, the ascent of the Macedonian peoples will be as barely permanently checked as was that of the Czechs, Slovenes and Ruthenes in Austria, just as Hungary and Russia will be unable to keep the enslaved nations without rights and in cultural poverty.

However, for Austria the impending collapse of Turkish power in Europe is

26. The Battle of Königsgrätz of 1866 was when Austria was defeated by Bismarck's Prussia, and the Battle of Sedan of 1870 was when Prussia defeated France. Prussia's rise led Austria to turn its attentions eastwards.

27. Mainly Kosovo, the heartland of the medieval kingdoms of Serbia.

28. Otto Bauer, 'Nationalitätenfrage und Sozialdemokratie', *Menschen und Völker*, Volume 2, pp187, 429ff (special edition, pp215, 494ff, Bauer's note); in the recent English translation, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, op cit, pp176, 448ff. The 'non-historic' peoples was a term used by Frederick Engels to describe mainly the Slav peoples of Austria-Hungary and the Balkans who, because of their apparent lack of a state-creating history, were according to him destined to be absorbed by the 'historic' peoples, such as the Germans and the Magyars. Bauer is here implicitly acknowledging that history was disproving this theory.

a fact of great significance. How will this development of the Balkan peoples affect their compatriots in Austria, Hungary and Bosnia? Will the expansionist cravings of the Austrian imperialists lead the powers that be into the foolhardy bravado of a march on Salonika? Will we still have peace if Russia wants to unfurl its flag in Constantinople? So whether we stay at peace will be decided in the Balkans. For that reason the Austrian working class cannot remain indifferent to the problems of the Balkans.

However it is not only our peace policy, but also our economic policy that points us to the Balkans. Close commercial ties bind us to the Balkan peoples. Our exports for 1905 to the Balkan states and Turkey represented a value of 252.7 million crowns, that is 11.26 per cent of our total exports. To no other country — besides the German Empire — are so many goods exported from the Austro-Hungarian customs zone as to these; our exports to Asia, Africa, America and Australia amount to only 204 million crowns in total, that is, to about a fifth less than the exports to the Balkan states. In addition to these exports there is a very considerable volume of imports. In 1905, we imported commodities to the value of 186.6 million crowns from the states of the Balkan Peninsula and the Turkish Levant, and hence more than from any other economic area except the German Empire and the United States; 8.6 per cent of our total imports come from the Balkan states.

In spite of that, our economic policy was never aimed at binding us closer economically to the Balkan states. The Hungarian magnates and the Austrian agrarians have, regardless of the export interests of our industry, always sought to hinder the food supply from the countries of the Lower Danube. A preliminary convention of 1878 ought to have paved the way for complete customs union with Serbia, but the selfish Hungarian nobility rejected the valuable concession that Serbia wanted to grant us in return for the support afforded it by Austria-Hungary at the Congress of Berlin. Ever since our agrarian economic policy dragged us into the tariff war with Romania, we have permanently forfeited the powerful position achieved by our trade policy there. The trade agreement achieved so laboriously with Bulgaria could not promote our exports effectively, as the agrarian tendencies of our economic policy made it impossible for our agents to obtain more valuable concessions. Every one of the countless hurdles that make the import of foodstuffs from the South-East more difficult not only makes meat and bread dearer for the Austrian consumers, but also hinders industrial exports.

But not only have the agrarian axioms of our commercial policy made the establishment of friendly relations with the Balkan peoples difficult; moreover, our whole Balkan policy could not help but arouse deep distrust among the young peoples of the peninsula, and thereby weaken our economic and political position in the Balkans. Above all, the legitimist tradition of our policy worked towards this end — the Balkan peoples have had to take almost every step on the arduous path towards state independence against the objection and resistance of Austria.

It is strange how precisely the fact that the Balkan peoples have compatriots

within the Monarchy was at the source of the hostility between Austria-Hungary and the Balkan states. It did not have to be so. The Hungarian Romanians and the Austrian and Hungarian Serbs are on a higher cultural level than their compatriots outside the Monarchy, and they enjoy the great advantage of a greater economic area; how easily could the cultural centre of these nations lie within our empire, how strong would the bond that binds the Balkan peoples to us be, if we had provided a school system for these young nations, if we had ensured them the free continued development of their culture within the framework of the Empire, and proved to them by deeds that freedom and legal security can go hand in hand! Instead of this, our rulers deny them national autonomy. The Magyar master enslaves Romanians and Serbs, a policy blinded by suspicion and fear, orchestrated by Roman clericalism, divides Croats and Serbs, and short-sightedness and narrow-mindedness make Dalmatia the poorest and most neglected province of the empire. Fear of the irredenta merely calls forth the irredenta!

Things have become even worse since the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁹ Here Austria could have offered the Serbian nation a great example of cultural development in a large territory — which would necessarily have won Austria the hearts of the Balkan peoples. We have not done this: the Turkish agrarian system is still in force in Bosnia; the peasant must still cede a third or even a half of his yield to the landlord; he is still threatened by arbitrary dispossession. And the economic benefits that we brought to the province were not freely given, but forcibly imposed: we have not only subjected the province to a bureaucratic system that does not even implement the most primitive principles of modern state administration — *the justice system* and the government are not even separated at the lowest level — but we have even put the bureaucrats under the command of the army! We not only allow an unbridled military absolutism to hold sway in the provinces, but we deny even the municipalities any semblance of autonomy. And all this is despite the fact that the compatriots of the Bosniaks³⁰ in the East suffer no restraints on their freedom, and in the North, after all, at least benefit from the most elementary rights of a constitutional state! Is it any wonder that the administration of Bosnia causes us to appear to the Balkan peoples as a conqueror, rather than as a bearer of culture?

29. Eduard Bernstein has recently praised the Austro-Hungarian administration of Bosnia as a commendable enterprise of colonial cultural policy. Even if this were so, it would not help the point Bernstein is trying to prove: the administration of Bosnia cannot be compared with that of a tropical colony, our trade with the population of the occupied provinces has a wholly different character, and produces wholly different social effects to the exploitation of South-West Africa or Cameroon, of Congo or India; finally, Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia cannot therefore be compared even with a typical capitalist colonial policy, since the population of Bosnia are compatriots of two nations of the Monarchy, and because their economic system and culture is not so very different from that of our own South Slavs. (Bauer's note)

30. 'Bosniak' was a term then associated with the Habsburg attempt to create a Bosnian nation that was neither Serb, Croat nor Muslim, as a way of resisting Serbian claims in particular. Today, the term specifically means the Bosnian Muslims. Bauer here adopts the term to mean the entire population of Bosnia.

In this way, our agrarian economic policy, the legitimist tendencies of our foreign policy, the unwise nationalities policy of Austria, the brutal national oppression in Hungary, and finally military-absolutist rule in Bosnia, have contributed to arousing hatred and distrust towards us in the Balkans — sentiments that are just as damaging to our commercial ties as to our political influence. Only the policy of *free trade with the East*, the policy of national autonomy, the policy of the *respect for and inviolability of national self-determination both within the framework of the Monarchy and outside it*, can create the necessary state of mind on which to base our Balkan policy.

Thus the policy of the Austrian Social Democracy vis-à-vis the Balkan Question is not hard to determine. Its domestic policy of democracy and national autonomy first of all opens up the possibility of friendly relations with our neighbours in the South-East; its struggle against the agrarian economic policy paves the way to economic relations that benefit the Balkan peoples just as much as us. However, the Austrian working class will oppose with all its might any policy of conquest in the Balkans. The suspicion that the Monarchy is planning and preparing conquests in the South is a perpetual source of distrust and hostility, and is the worst enemy of our trade in the Balkans; and any attempt at extending the frontiers of the Empire to the South or the East must inevitably involve us in violent military upheavals. Our peace policy and our economic policy exclude the idea of violent conquest in the Balkan Peninsula.

The solid basis of the whole foreign policy of the Monarchy is *the alliance with the German Empire*. That this alliance protects the peace of Central Europe, and that friendly relations promote our trade with Germany is, from the standpoint of the working class, its great merit; after all, we are so closely bound culturally and economically with no other state as with the German Empire. In 1905, 45.47 per cent of our total exports and 37.42 per cent of our total imports were with Germany. One must also certainly note that the dissolution of the alliance would drive Germany into the arms of Russia, and make Austria a slave to Russia; Tsarism, stained with the blood of the peoples, would become the unrestrained master of Europe. Our policy of peace, national economic development and democracy imposes on the workers of all nations the obligation not to undermine the alliance with Germany.

Insofar as the alliance with Germany is an alliance with the German people, a support for peace and economic development, it corresponds to the needs of the Austrian workers. However, the working class will never allow the alliance of the peoples to become a conspiracy of the ruling class against the peoples. It cannot be the wish of the German workers in Austria to protect the rule of the Prussian-German junkers; the ruling class in the Empire is, after all, the deadly enemy of the German working class. Austria should not play 'brilliant second' to the desire of German imperialism for world-political adventures. If German imperialism, whose only hope is our help, knows that it cannot expect our support in its experiments, if it is isolated, then it will be deprived of all its possibilities for action. We cannot render a more valuable service to the German workers in the Empire, who have always struggled might and main for the mainte-

nance of peace, in the struggle against the ravenous hunger of German capital for new spheres of exploitation. We will faithfully carry out our duty as the ally of the Germany of peace, labour and science, whenever it is threatened by grave danger; the Germany of imperialism, the Germany of exploitation and oppression, should not expect our assistance if it seeks, against the will of the great majority of the German people, to set in motion an army of millions in order to open up new markets and new spheres of investment for capital.

We must also shape our relations with Russia according to similar principles. We want to be faithful friends to the nations of the Russian Empire, but Tsarism is still today the most dangerous enemy of all democracy. Therefore we will not oppose the agreements of the Monarchy with Russia, as long as they serve the maintenance of peace and cooperation in the Balkans, and prevent the outbreak of conflicts. Also when both governments continue working in agreement to 'undermine Turkey', when they seek through international organisations and a system of international control to re-establish legal security and order in the Slav regions of Turkey, we can only approve of this. But the good understanding with Russia must not degrade the Austrian authorities to the status of henchmen of Tsarism. In our cooperation in the Balkans we must rule out any thought of territorial expansion, of seizing provinces and acquiring lands. However, above all, the agreements with Russia should only serve the safeguarding of peace, not the preparation for fighting; they should prevent the possibility of conflict with Russia, but they should not be directed against England and Germany, and especially not Italy.

Dimitrije Tucović Austria-Hungary in the Balkans³¹

Austria-Hungary is a peaceful power, it does not want to conquer anything, and in this respect has long since given up every ambition... We are the most blameless of all the Great Powers...

IT is in this evangelical tone that the *Neue Freie Presse*,³² the most conscious defender of Austrian bourgeois capitalist interests, responds to the attacks which have been directed from all sides against the new course of Austrian policy in the Balkans. In dealing with this question, the head of Austrian foreign

31. From *Radnicka Novina*, 19 February 1908. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić.

32. A Viennese liberal bourgeois daily (1864-1939).

policy himself, Marshal F Aehrenthal, gave this same tone to all the newspapers most sympathetic to him in his statement before the Hungarian Delegations³³ on 27 January in which he outlined his new programme for the construction of the Balkan railways. In the statement he claimed that Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans was a policy 'beneficial for all the nations', a policy 'of respect and progress for the Balkan states', and a policy 'of defence of the Christian population', as the late empress Catherine the Great³⁴ once used to say: '*True to our Balkan policy, we do not go in search of any territorial conquests there.*'

What in reality is this policy that the Viennese press wants to portray as so innocent? Is Austria a country chosen by God to make the small states and nations in the Balkans happy and free, as is more or less believed even beyond the bourgeois circles that are directly involved? Is this a *capitalist* policy of conquest, or an *Austrian* 'policy of peace' hitherto unknown to our way of thinking?

The facts give the lie to all these diplomatic tricks, whose only purpose is to hide the true goal. The new concessions for the construction of the railways in Turkey are the beginning of the extension of conquest and enslavement in the Balkans, which Austria, '*true to its Balkan policy*', began with her occupation of *Bosnia and Herzegovina*. When in 1875 the Christian subjects of Herzegovina rose up to shake off the Turkish yoke just as their kinsmen had earlier done in Serbia, Austria-Hungary obtained a mandate from the Congress of Berlin to occupy both provinces, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Turkish yoke was exchanged for foreign rule; the blood of the rebels was shed for a foreign country. In the name of peace, easily and without losses, Austria-Hungary gained a great advantage in the Balkans. At this time, the Western powers, with England at their head, gave away these Serb regions to Austria, because they saw in the national liberation of the Balkan nations the strengthening of Russian influence and the growth of the danger from Pan Slavism. (Even now the Austrian press talks of the '*Greater Serbian*' threat to world peace!)

'Now, by way of Bosnia, *we too have become a Balkan power*, and our task is to understand the times and exploit them.' So says Aehrenthal in his statement. And this means: *earlier conquests give us the right to new conquests*. The consequences of this 'peaceful policy' were felt bodily by the small kingdom of Serbia, whose only sin is that she finds herself in the path of Austria's policy of conquest in the Balkans. Austrian diplomacy has not failed to use every means to make it impossible for Serbia to become stronger in any way. Not only was it necessary to take away from Serbia all its powers of attraction over the Serb people in Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey, but also completely to deprive her of her independence. Austrian diplomacy knew how to gain decisive influence over the old Serbian dynasty, and through it to direct the domestic and foreign policy of

33. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible to two separate bodies, the so-called Austrian and Hungarian Delegations, consisting of 60 members each, chosen from the parliaments of Vienna and Budapest.
34. Catherine the Great (1729-1796) was the Empress of Russia (1762-1796) who extended Russia by taking the Crimea and a large part of Poland. She thus prepared Russia for the rôle it would play in Europe in the nineteenth century, particularly in the Balkans

the country against the will of the people. She is now singing the same tune in Montenegro, where Prince Nikola has nothing better to do than to stage trials against Serbia and the Montenegrin opposition. The end that befell the old Serbian dynasty has not made him any the wiser. In the same way, Serbia's reputation abroad also lay in Vienna's hands. Serbia is a country with all the weaknesses and surprises of a bureaucratic peasant country. *But that she is today as black as the devil himself in the eyes of the whole world is due to the success of Vienna's journalists and her paid scribblers.* And the two-year Customs War, with which Austria-Hungary responded to the preparation of a customs' union between Serbia and Bulgaria, has been her latest attempt to open a road towards Salonika across Serbia. That is the 'policy of respect and progress for the Balkan states'!

But after the fall of Goluchowski,³⁵ who led a policy of open force against Serbia, came Aehrenthal with the slogan: *if not through Serbia, then around Serbia.* This is to be achieved with new railway lines through the Sandjak of Novi Pazar and Montenegro, which would bring Austria-Hungary in direct contact with the Aegean and Mediterranean seas.

What is Austria aiming at with this railway programme?

Today the construction of all great railway lines on foreign soil entails securing political rule. This is beyond discussion for every man dedicated to the methods of colonial conquest. It is most true of the building of the railway lines in Turkey, where not a single train can pass through such an unruly population without garrison protection. And the building of this Novi Pazar railway means the occupation of these regions; the linking of these lines with the Bosnian railways means linking these regions with the occupied lands. The military significance of this track has been assessed by one expert in the Viennese newspaper *Zeit* like this:

When the projected Uvac-Mitrovica³⁶ line is built, it will then be possible to launch not only one corps, but *a whole army* towards Salonika. Austria-Hungary will then be *the European military power* which will be able to make a thrust into *the heart of the Balkans* with the greatest speed and *with significant force*. Besides that, this railway line makes us completely independent of Serbia in every military action.

These comments are sufficient to show that the new railways unconditionally lead to new territorial conquests, and are undoubtedly preparing the way for gaining mastery over the Balkans. Compared to this political goal, the commercial significance of this railway is unimportant. What sort of economic interests might demand a new link with Salonika, which is 300 kilometres longer than the present railway, Vienna-Budapest-Belgrade-Salonika? The secretary of Vienna's Chamber of Commerce, Richard Riel, has demonstrated 'that today's railway

35. Count Agenor Goluchowski (1849-1921), a Polish aristocrat who was Habsburg foreign minister (1895-1906).

36. Uvac in eastern Bosnia and Mitrovica in Kosovo, where the railway would link up with the Ottoman one to Salonika.

line Budapest–Belgrade–Salonika will *always* remain *more* favourable for this city *by far*... The diversion of *Austrian-Hungarian* traffic from Salonika and the Aegean Sea to the Bosnian or the Dalmatian-Albanian railway line is unthinkable if one does not resort to compulsory tariff measures.' (*New Free Press*, 31 January)

But the same Mr Riel has demonstrated not only the economic uselessness, but the real political significance of the new railways. 'For us, the significance of this narrow little strip of Turkish territory (the Sandjak of Novi Pazar)', he says, 'which has sneaked in between Serbia and Montenegro, is *exclusively* that it separates these two countries... and our position there has to be defended, not with the construction of traffic arteries in the wilds of Pešter,³⁷ but in Belgrade and Cetinje.' Just one glance at the map shows what these railways really mean to Serbia and Montenegro. Both projected railways are the extension of two of the present-day branches of the Bosnian railway. The first is linked to the existing railway at Kotor,³⁸ leads to the Montenegrin coast towards Skadar³⁹ and *surrounds Montenegro from the sea*; the second begins where the present day Bosnian eastern railway ends on the Turkish-Serbian border and leads to Mitrovica *separating Montenegro and Serbia*. Within this unyielding, iron embrace of Austria-Hungary, Montenegro and its independence will be compelled to fall into a deep sleep, and Serbia is completely enclosed and rendered incapable of any kind of independent development. The English parliamentarian, Lynch,⁴⁰ has very accurately said: '*Signs of the peaceful throttling of these young nations already exist*.' It is none other than the 'most blameless power' of Mr F Achrenthal who is throttling them.



The storm of protest which this Austrian railway plan has provoked among all the great powers, with the exception of Germany, shows how greatly times have changed since the Congress of Berlin. The illusory fear of Pan Slavism, a fear which led Europe to open the doors of the Balkans to Austria in 1878, no longer exists. This Pan Slavic dream never really had any strength. In fact, today, it is spoken of in Russia by only a few reactionaries who have nothing else to do, and by the Viennese press who would like to use an inflated Pan Slavic threat, now as in 1878, as a springboard for new conquests in the Balkans. The young Balkan peoples have shown they do not want to be either Russian or Austrian lackeys.

Fearing Russian supremacy in the Balkans, the Western powers granted *actual* supremacy to Austria in 1878. The current protests against the further penetration of that very same Austria have sprung from this same concern for the balance of power. As compensation for Austrian railway concessions, Russia is seeking the construction of a trans-Balkan railway which would link Radujevac

37. Pešter is a highland region of the Sandjak of Novi Pazar.

38. On the Adriatic coast, then in Austria-Hungary, now in Montenegro.

39. Formerly in Turkey, now Shkodër in north-west Albania.

40. Henry Fennis Blossie Lynch (1862-1913), a barnater and Liberal Party MP (1906-10) who wrote a two-volume study of Armenia based on his travels in the Caucasus.

on the Danube at the Serbian-Romanian border with the Adriatic Sea at Bar or Ulcinj.⁴¹ Via this railway line Russia would obtain a link with these regions. But its real significance would be that Serbia would escape Austria's clutches. From a political point of view, a trans-Balkan railway is no compensation for Austria's Novi Pazar railway. In that respect, one should never lose sight of the fact that Russia is not in a position to swallow the Turkish regions of the Balkans little by little, piece by piece in the way that Austria is able to do after her occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This is how the railway struggle came about. What is most interesting here is the grouping of the great powers. On the one side, Germany, Austria and *Turkey*, and on the other, England, France and *Russia*; on the one side, Wilhelm, Franz Joseph and *Sultan Abdul Hamid*, and on the other, Edward, Clemenceau and *Tsar Nicholas*.⁴² This strange combination, which our old standpoint regarding the motives of the foreign policies of the capitalist states anticipated, at the same time demonstrates that the envy of the selfish capitalist powers is to blame for the preservation of the 'Bête rouge'⁴³ on the Bosphorus and the unparalleled enslavement of the Balkan population.



This is the article which was written for the readers of the German and not the Serbian workers' press, but which was never published. Its task, as readers can see for themselves, was to acquaint the German comrades with conditions and relations in the Balkans about which they are either wholly uninformed, or wrongly informed. With knowledge there comes protest.

And international Social Democracy must protest against the capitalist conquest of the Balkan peoples, not only in the name of its programme which calls for freedom and independence for all peoples, but also in the name of the most vital existential interests of the proletariat, in the first place the proletariat of the conquering countries. Every imperialist policy of conquest on the part of the capitalist states necessarily provokes greater and greater sacrifices in order to raise the forces for war, sacrifices which materially and politically fall first and foremost on the backs of the proletariat. On the eve of this new railway plan, which is in reality a plan for new conquests, the Austrian delegations voted *143 million crowns for the building of a new fleet*; first the iron fist and then further on into the Balkans. And whoever supports further penetration into the Balkans has to be in favour of the iron fist, and the latter serves not only to throttle the small Balkan peoples but also to keep down the revolutionary proletariat at home.

41. Bar and Ulcinj are Montenegrin seaports near the border with Albania.

42. Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) was Emperor of Germany (1888-1918). Franz Joseph (1830-1916) was Habsburg Emperor of Austria-Hungary (1848-1916). Abdul Hamid (1842-1918) was Sultan of Turkey (1876-1909). Edward VII (1841-1910) was King of England (1901-1910). Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929) was French Prime Minister (1906-09 and 1917-20). Nicholas II (1868-1918) was Tsar of Russia (1894-1917).

43. The red beast, a reference to Sultan Abdul Hamid and his bloody despotism.

In the same way, the arming and expansion of one capitalist power provokes mistrust and enmity among the competing powers who themselves re-arm and prepare for further expansion. To the 143 million crowns which Austria-Hungary has decided on for building a new fleet, Russia is preparing to respond with several times as much in roubles. The danger is greater still: *Macedonia could become somebody's Manchuria*. Russia built the Siberian railway 'for purely commercial reasons'; but she exported *war* and imported *revolution*. What more Austria will contribute to culture with its new commercial railway, we shall see. For Social Democracy, as one of the better German party papers says, *the building of these railways is as culturally beneficial as building battleships*.

And finally, all this robbery by the capitalists of Vienna and Budapest concerns the Serbian proletariat the most. In truth, it is unable to influence the conquering policy of the mighty capitalist states, and in that respect does not harbour any illusions. But it will remain true to the principles of international socialism and repay its debt to international proletarian solidarity if it protests with utter determination against these new colonial snares closing around the Balkans. Our protest is joined by the protest of the whole international proletariat, which at its last International Congress⁴⁴ proclaimed: 'As the enemy of all exploitation of man by man and as defenders of all the oppressed regardless of race, the Congress condemns this policy of plunder and conquest which shamefully applies the principle that "might is right", and tramples underfoot the rights of the conquered peoples.'

Dimitrije Tucović German Socialism and the Russian Danger⁴⁵

Dear Dragiša

... For some time I have been following the newspaper coverage of the Balkan railway. I have just come from the editorial offices of *Vorwärts*, where I was to get a reply about my article on that matter. The article could not be published. I had expected as much. Ever since the 1870s when Marx and Engels spoke of the Herzegovinian uprising as a revolt of 'horse-thieves' provoked by the 'rolling out of Russian roubles', Social Democracy in Germany has continued and still continues to determine its standpoint on the Eastern Question by one *external*

44. A reference to the Congress of the Second International held at Stuttgart in 1907.

45. Extract from a letter to Dragiša Lapčević, Berlin, 20 February 1908. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić.

factor: the struggle to the death with the Russian Panslavic danger! It is true that today no one dares write about that danger as they once did, but it pervades the very soul of the German socialists. And, of course, every Austrian success in the Balkans is a defeat for Russia — and that is what they are calling for! In the whole affair, the Austrian party is more or less neutral, but certain reports from Vienna in our own newspapers there correspond with the writings of the Viennese press, whose equal in distortion and lying I do not know.

This conservatism of our comrades is all the more curious because the conditions of the 1870s have changed greatly, and because the *bourgeoisie* of Western Europe, and especially of England, has itself revised its old standpoint. The danger of Balkan conquest is no longer threatened by Russia, but by Austria; the straining of relations following the disturbance of the balance of power no longer originates from Nicholas, but from Franz Joseph, which merely confirms our standpoint that the conquering policy of the bourgeoisie is based on *class* and not on *race*. Today, no-one believes anymore in the Panslavic danger, which anyway never represented a real force. And what is especially regrettable, the socialist ranks are full of people who decide this question of capitalist conquest according to *circumstances, practically*, and defend *the right of conquest of the uncultured by the cultured*. It goes without saying that we in the Balkans are also counted amongst the 'uncultured' whom Austria has to civilise. Of course, no one actually says this (except for what Bernstein wrote about Bosnia),⁴⁶ but then, as I myself have experienced, neither can one say the opposite. However, I do not know where the *principled* opposition between the socialist and capitalist world views can be more clearly or more splendidly demonstrated than over imperialism.

'... The article is well written... the standpoint correct... we are sorry for the small states and peoples in the Balkans... but the question is thorny and we have to be reserved, like our comrades in Austria': that was the reply of the editor of *Vorwärts*. I am telling you about this matter because this kind of attitude from a socialist organ has affected me rather badly. But given my beliefs, where else can I turn?

To you and the comrades, socialist greetings from

D Tucović

46. In the second part of his article 'Kulturrecht und Kolonialfrage' ['The Right of Culture and the Colonial Question'] in *Vorwärts*, 4 October 1907, Eduard Bernstein had written: 'It is the universal opinion of all experts, whether non-socialists or socialists, that Austria in Bosnia and Herzegovina, England in Egypt, or France in Tunis, have accomplished real cultural work that is very beneficial to the population of these lands.' This article was Bernstein's response to those, like Kautsky, who attacked him for the colonial views he expressed at the Second International's Stuttgart Congress in August 1907. I am grateful to Mike Jones for this translation. See also note 28 to Otto Bauer's article above, 'Austria's Foreign Policy and Social Democracy'.

Arbeiter-Zeitung War?⁴⁷

THE streets of Belgrade resound with the clamour of war. School children wander through the city bearing flags and continually shouting 'Down with Austria! Up with Serbian Bosnia!' Tables are set up on street corners where volunteers are recruited. The army is being mobilised and both young and old are being called to the colours. War is the only subject of the newspapers, war is the call from the platforms to the demonstrating multitude. One stands amazed and uncertain before this drama. Should one take it as a noisy farce of megalomania, or should one take it as bitter earnestness? Has madness really seized three million people in a wild whirlpool so that they forget all reality, all the conditions of the possible, and want to throw themselves into a fight against the ten-fold superior power of a powerful military state, into a fight which can only end in crushing defeat and destruction? It would be madness which does not deserve the respectful description of courage, and does not properly conform to the traditions of the state and the people, because these traditions by no means correspond with self-sacrificing heroism. In the wars of liberation of the Balkan peoples, when the Romanians and Bulgarians fought with outstanding bravery on the side of the Russian army, the Serbs stood in the shadows. In the later fighting with Bulgaria, the Serbian army covered itself with disgrace and shame.⁴⁸ And what Serbian history tells us after that are *pronunciamentos* by ambitious officers, nocturnal murders, blood and corruption.

One cannot also really understand what moral and legal motives move the Serbs. Though grave insult has been done to its honour and authority, Turkey has not in fact experienced loss, but nevertheless it has not lifted its sword; in its official reply to Bulgaria it let it be known that it would desist from the use of violent means. And now King Peter⁴⁹ steps into the breach. He feels himself called upon to put right the shattered world of justice once more. One may perhaps ask whether the man who four years ago in Geneva undertook careful con-

47. Leading article in *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), 9 October 1908. Translated from the German by Mike Jones.

48. These two sentences refer to the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885 respectively.

49. King Peter Karađorđević (1842-1921) of Serbia came to the throne following the bloody nocturnal murder of the pro-Austrian King Alexander Obrenović (1876-1903) and his Queen in May 1903. Shot and sabred by army officers, their naked bodies were dumped from a balcony onto the palace grounds. The regicide provoked much condemnation of the 'primitive' Serbs across Europe at the time. But the overthrow had been preceded in March by a mass demonstration in Belgrade against the regime when four demonstrators were shot dead and seven wounded, murders in broad daylight that attracted rather less condemnation. Leon Trotsky later commented: 'That was no mere palace revolution. The officers acted only as the instrument of the indignation felt by all the advanced and thinking elements of the nation.' (*The Balkan Wars 1912-13*, New York, 1980, p74)

sultations about how to steal two sleeping people in the night and murder them in their bed, and whose throne and crown result from this well-accomplished nocturnal slaughter, is perhaps suitable and ready for the post of the avenger of an infringed morality. But does it depend on the personality of the king? His people undoubtedly stand behind him this time, and today rejoicingly calling him out of the palace, from whose balcony, amid thunderous *zima*,⁵⁰ he gave an inflammatory speech. Whatever one thinks of Peter, he acts on behalf of his nation, and acts according to the national sentiments of the Serbs. Indeed. One would only venture to ask whether these national sentiments in their unbridled, wild expressions have, on this occasion, a good basis in law. Bosnia has never belonged to the kingdom of Serbia; the annexation, which by the way only changes the form of an existing state of possession, takes nothing away from the power and nothing away from the claims of the Serbian state, insofar as they could be established by treaty. How can Serbia even raise a protest? Its signature is not appended to the Treaty of Berlin.

However, the Serbs regard Bosnia as tied to them by blood relations. We do not want to mock the Greater Serbian idea. It only expresses in dream-like distorted forms the impulse towards national unification that exists in all peoples. We should not be astounded if pain and anger are manifested in Serbia over an event which symbolically expresses the dashing of their hopes. One sees here, however, not the ideal of an upwardly-striving people, but on the contrary a continuing policy which, from the beginning and for decades, has counted on the impossible, and has in propaganda and inspiration enticed a whole people onto dangerous, false paths of delusion. By reading between the lines, anyone can deduce from the crazy idea of a war against Austria-Hungary, confirmation of the accusations which have been made against the activity of the Greater Serbian movement, which until now one mostly took as exaggeration. It is only because of ridiculous putsches and nonsensical conspiracies, which have for years nourished the hope of lifting a political state of possession firmly anchored in the power of a great state, that the masses can today be carried along by the idea of what is, according to all preconditions and sensible thinking, an impossible war.

It may well be that those who were previously leaders are now being reluctantly led and squeezed from all sides. In no other state in the Balkans does there prevail worse maladministration, are politics dominated so fully by the instincts of egotism, greed for profit, and impure ambition. However, the suggestive means by which this adventurist policy captured the minds of the people was by whipping up national hopes. Behind the national mask hides the grimace of the conspirator, and behind the mirage of a future Greater Serbia is concealed the bold intrigues of Karadjordjević. It is difficult, indeed impossible, for those who have hitherto gained impunity, power and esteem by exaggerating national expectations, to admit a sober truth that removes from under them the ground of their being, their actions and their rights. As a matter of fact, the tragic delusion of a people is being enacted in cruel and grotesque forms in Belgrade, and it would be foolish, for all the forgiving understanding that one may grant the ef-

50. *Zima* is the Serbian for 'Long live!'

forts of a people striving for national unification, to devote a shadow of sympathy and pity to Peter, Pašić,⁵¹ and whatever the Belgrade adventurers and political swindlers may be called. Nevertheless, not all the wrong is on their side, and if it should come to the inconceivable, the senseless bloodshed of a Serbo-Austrian war, Serbian megalomania has not been the only source of evil. The other evil, however, is obviously to be found in the act that all patriots consider a necessary one, possibly an act of deliverance — the annexation of Bosnia.

Aehrenthal's speech says that, in order to clear up the situation in the Balkan Peninsula and to remove the cause of threatening disorders, it was essential to bring about a definitive legal situation in the once occupied lands. But curiously, at the moment that he issues this assertion to the world, his act reveals effects of precisely the opposite sort. The act that allegedly should have brought peace to the East, securing a demonstration of the spheres of power, on the contrary ignites all four corners of the peninsula, and causes all the peoples in the regions pacified by the Young Turk movement to rise up angrily in disorder once more.

Aehrenthal speaks of a measure of state necessity which has only brought the existing, valid situation into a new form of legal expression. In the Balkans, however, the peoples hear merely this one thing: that a solemnly sworn treaty has been broken, that treaties mean nothing and protect nothing, and that anyone wanting to assert in good time his right to something may therefore reach out and seize hold of it. The alleged peace measure of the Vienna cabinet has become the reveille, which on Crete and Samos, and in Macedonia will be perceived as a challenge which cannot be forbidden to the small powers, when the great power and guarantor has given itself the right. May we now complain if the fire leaps up against our walls?

Dimitrije Tucović What We Say⁵²

I: The Annexation

THE gangster knife of the greedy capitalist aggressor has yet again been driven into the heart of a nation. Emperor Franz Joseph announced the other day 'that he was extending his right of sovereignty' over Bosnia and Her-

51. Nikola Pašić (1845-1926) was Prime Minister several times and the leading Serbian statesman of his day. A follower of Svetozar Marković in his youth, Pašić formed the Radical Party in 1881 from Marković's 'radicals'. However, he transformed it from a radical peasant organisation into the favoured party of the Serbian bourgeoisie. He played an important rôle in persuading the Entente to back the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918-19, and was later Prime Minister of the new state.

52. From *Radnički Glasnik*, 9 October 1908. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić and Andreja Živković.

zegovina too. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of his reign that began after the blood of Hungary's revolutionaries and Vienna's workers and students had been shed in 1848, the 'noble' Franz Joseph, that doyen of rulers, sought to crown and embellish his jubilee by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina to his state — *without asking and against the will of the people* who live in these regions. The jubilees of rulers usually signify nothing other than the enslavement of nations, in this case, the enslavement of the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose heroic efforts to liberate themselves from Turkish rule were exploited by Austria-Hungary, with the blessing of Europe at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, so that she could impose *her own* bloody and tyrannical rule, *her own* degenerate and stultifying policy, and *her own* colonial regime of extortion and exploitation.

'I am also extending my right of sovereignty to these two regions...' So goes the Emperor's announcement, the latest accomplished act in the devious policy of throttling and enslaving a whole people. Was this act necessary so that a Constitution could be established? No. For 30 years the occupying authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina established a constitution of military tribunals and states of emergency instead of a constitution of national rights and representation that could have been established without breaking the Treaty of Berlin and without destroying a people. Is this right of sovereignty civilised and democratic? No. The very manner in which this act was carried out is evidence of a brutality capable of every injustice, barbarism and tyranny. And we social democrats add our own most energetic protests against this act, and we demand *that, by means of a plebiscite, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves decide their own future fate, and that of their homeland*. No one else has any right to impose his tutelage on them uninvited. We are against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as we would be against the annexation of any other nation, because it is an act of tyranny, an act of enslavement.

II: Europe's attitude

The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has broken one of the most important clauses of the Treaty of Berlin. But it is a vain hope to think that the Great Power signatories of that treaty will take up the defence of national rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are no rights in the regulation of international relations. What else are the international agreements the capitalist Great Powers conclude but mutual deals by which the great and the powerful barter with the small and the weak? The Treaty of Berlin itself, for which the precious blood of the people, their own blood, was shed for their own liberation, served as the means for the base settlement of numerous compensation deals between the Great Powers, and for the settling of their accounts; the treaty arose out of injustice, it embodied injustice, and it will likewise sink in injustice for as long as the fate of things lies in the hands of the representatives of capitalist interests.

Ought we really to appeal to Europe, to the Europe whose humanitarianism towards enslaved peoples has been demonstrated by the latest events in China, India, Persia, Morocco, etc? In China, the Great Powers of Europe are in unison

trying to tighten the chains of the awakened, populous and worthy Chinese people. In India, several hundred thousand bureaucrats and soldiers are guarding the absolute power of English capital from several hundred million Indians. In Persia, the blood in which Tsarist Russia, together with the Shah's government, suppressed the progressive movement of the intelligent elements of the Persian people has yet to run cold. The radical-democratic government of republican France is doing the same in Indo-China and Morocco. A hundred years ago, the French revolution carried the ideas of freedom and human rights to the peoples of the East; 50 years ago, Western Europe proclaimed the principle of national freedom; *today, the entire European bourgeoisie is feeding the awakened peoples of the East with bullets, peoples she herself revolutionised with her own goods, her own technology, and her own political ideas.* Today in the Europe of bourgeois capitalist governments, solidarity reigns in the enslavement of peoples whenever these governments manage to reach agreement. And we social democrats have not the slightest doubt that, if she has not already done so, this official Europe will approve the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, but will then seek some compensation for herself in the Balkans or beyond in Europe or Asia or Africa. We condemn this robbery of whole countries and peoples, a robbery which is the most marked characteristic of the present social system based on the robbery of the forces of labour, and we will call upon our comrades abroad to raise their voices in parliament and in public in support of the freedom of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian peoples, just as we did recently by way of our Memorandum.

III: Popular Defence

When the freedom of a people is in question, wherever they are, whatever they are called and whatever tongue they speak, we social democrats are on their side out of our sincere socialist convictions. The Bosnian national movement, like national struggles in general, is not and could not have been artificially created by anyone's propaganda. Its causes go much deeper, and lie in the changed conditions of national life, in the development of capitalist production in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the brisk traffic and strengthened exchange of goods and ideas, out of which democratic and national aspirations had to appear. To the same extent that the capitalist mode of production develops and strengthens tendencies towards the indivisible modern state, states our teacher *Karl Kautsky*, there develop in its womb not only state-democratic aspirations but also national struggles, if the state includes several nations. Both are the offspring of the same mother, and are connected to modern development by the bonds of natural necessity:

On the other hand, with the increase in traffic also grows the exchange of ideas between the members of the same nation who belong to different state organisations, and the more the national struggle flares up, so each nationality feels more keenly the need for the closest community of its parts, as the best means of developing all its forces. Thus, in those na-

tions who are divided amongst several territories that border one another but who belong to different states, the capitalist mode of production gives rise to the aspiration to collect all these territories into one single state, and therefore to their secession from the former state community.

Both this national aspiration and the former derive necessarily from modern economic development, and can be as little held back as that development itself. Where such national aspirations struggle to be acknowledged, every modern party, including Social Democracy, the representative of the proletariat, must take this necessity into account; just as it supports the aspiration for the democratic ordering of the state, it must support both the aspiration for unification in a state and for the independence of the individual nations in which it lives and works. In this sense it must be as national as it is democratic.⁵³

Therefore, standing with our sympathies on the side of national aspirations to liberation and unification, we at the same time understand *that the economic, political and educational elevation of the nation is the most secure guarantee of her freedom*. This is especially true of small and tiny nations, who must wage an unequal struggle for their national existence, and who can only draw strength from the deep reservoir of the material and moral strength of the whole mass of the people, from their love and enthusiasm for freedom and their determination to endure all on its behalf. And when such a ruthless and ominous pilfering of the life of a nation is carried out, such as the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, then the national cause is *only* protected to the extent that each part, and each member of that national community feels the *will* and *strength* to support it immediately, courageously and to the end. In a word: *we, social democrats, see the power of the people to resist in popular defence and in a popular uprising*. And in this lies the important difference between us and those who see in the various units of the regular army and in the heavy and costly state apparatus, formed, maintained and used against the great majority of the people, an apparent guarantee of national defence. No. The strength of the nation does not lie here, and we cannot count on this and give it the nod. As a great German philosopher said in his letters to the German people: 'Positive proof can be given, which we shall come to in time, that no man can help us, not any God, not any possible event, but rather that we alone must help ourselves.' This the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must first and foremost know.

53 This quotation is from Karl Kautsky's 'Die Nationalitäten Frage in Russland' ['The National Question in Russia'], *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 28 April 1905.

Dimitrije Tucović and Karl Renner Debate on Bosnia⁵⁴

Dimitrije Tucović

FROM the standpoint of the social democratic parties of the small oppressed nations, I place much reliance on the fact that the Commission's⁵⁵ draft resolution once again stresses the duty of Social Democracy 'to support the right to self-determination of all nations and the defence of this right against military attack and tyrannical oppression'. Every neglect of this duty by the social democratic parties of the powerful nations leads to very great difficulties for the parties who have to work among the small, divided and oppressed nations. The Serbian Social Democratic Party, to which I belong, has had one such experience. At the time of the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia over the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we had to fight under very difficult circumstances; we had to break down the militaristic megalomania and war delirium of a people who, because of their genuinely difficult position, were also ready for the politics of *na banquer*, we had to put a stop to the Russian hypnosis of a people who were turning for help to any quarter at a time when Russian diplomatic interests had set about their work. And we battled consistently, openly and energetically both in parliament through the party's deputy Comrade Kacserović and also outside parliament through the press and public meetings.

In this struggle, our Austrian comrades rushed to our aid. They organised a strong campaign against the 'war swindlers' in Serbia, 'the heir to the throne of the war party', 'the dynasty's intrigues', 'corruption in Serbia', etc. And although they could have left it to us to settle accounts with our potentates, we are most grateful to them for their help. However, in future, we would prefer them to come to our assistance in a different, more genuine manner, *by energetically standing up against the colonial policy and the enslavement of nations undertaken by the rulers of Austria-Hungary*.

During the annexation crisis we felt isolated and — let me say — abandoned. At the moment when the danger of war was at its height, we did not feel

54. From the debate at the Eighth International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen, 31 August 1910. Translated from the Serbian and the French by Dragan Plavić and Andreja Živković. Tucović's speech is taken from his own full record of it in the Serbian party's daily *Radenike Novine*, to be found in his *Sabrana Dela* [Collected Works] (Belgrade, 1980), Volume 3, pp525-9. Renner's speech is taken from the French stenographic record of the Congress, *Ministère socialiste international tenu à Copenhague du 28 août au 3 septembre 1910* (Compte rendu analytique publié par le Secrétariat du Bureau Socialiste International), Gand, 1911, pp208-10.

55. These speeches were made in the Commission on Arbitration and Disarmament.

adequately assisted by Vienna; we did not see any strong mass action there, nor did the writings of the party press satisfy us. By placing the weight of its campaign on putting a stop to Serbia's pretensions — I have no wish to defend these pretensions here — the attitude of the press could only play down the responsibility of the Vienna regime.

But if during the crisis the conduct of the Austrian comrades in struggle against the danger of war was insufficiently energetic, their duty to defend *the right of nations to self-determination* was almost completely neglected by them. In our opinion, they took up a standpoint that was inaccurate and unprincipled. In the party press of the Austrian comrades, it was stated: there is nothing for Serbia in Bosnia because its signature is not on the Treaty of Berlin... If one can speak of anyone's rights being violated by the annexation, then it is those of Turkey, and not of Serbia!⁵⁶ We do not support the rights of Serbia, *but as far as Turkey's rights under the Treaty of Berlin are concerned, these are bloody rights, based on force and might, and Social Democracy cannot and must not celebrate them.* Social Democracy must have in mind not rights that are derived from imposed agreements and conquests, but the right of each nation to self-determination, including the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The party organ of the Austrian comrades wrote much about how down there in the Balkans there is no peace because of the 'great appetites' and 'megalomania', etc, of the Balkan states, and these views gradually took hold of the socialist press generally. I believe it necessary to state before the Socialist International Congress that this point of view is wrong. The Balkans do represent a permanent war danger and an inexhaustible source of conflicts and struggles. But it is wrong and superficial to look for their origins in the 'appetites' of the Balkan statelets or in the 'intrigues' of the dynasties; they do not lie here but rather, on the one hand, in the imperialist policy of the great capitalist powers towards the Balkans and in the intrigues of their diplomatic agents, and, on the other hand, in the legitimate aspirations and struggles of the Balkan peoples not only for national liberation and national unification, but also for 'the most elementary conditions of life'. What in fact differentiates Social Democracy's peace policy from the peace policy of the various bourgeois currents is not only the struggle against war when it is about to break out, and when it is being incited from all sides, *but rather the steady, persistent, daily, principled struggle against capitalist policy which is beset by its own contradictions and leads inevitably to war.* And the struggle of Social Democracy which has the greatest prospect of succeeding against the constant danger of war in the Balkans threatening world peace *is a principled and energetic struggle, and an uncompromising struggle, against the colonial and aggressive policy of the capitalist states who are stirring up trouble in the Balkans.*

Unlike the diplomats, we expect Social Democracy in the great and powerful states to oppose most energetically any attempt to label as 'disturbers of world peace' the small, oppressed nations who are feebly twisting and turning under the aggressor's heel. We expect this all the more so because the principled strug-

56. This is a reference to the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* Leader of 9 October 1908, 'War?', above, pp141-3.

gle of Social Democracy against the policy of conquest and for the right of national self-determination is a condition of existence of the workers' movement and Social Democracy in small and oppressed nations. With these demands of ours, we believe that we stand on socialist principles. And, because of this, we are at liberty to ask comrades not to lose sight of the fact that we are condemned to work within narrow limits and conditions, and that we live much more from the successes of the parties of the International than from our own. For us, the reputation of German Social Democracy is of special significance. Socialism in our case is, so to speak, a colonisation by ideas, and the slightest excuse for an unprincipled attitude by our foreign sister parties is seen as the fault of 'German' socialism, which indirectly makes our task much more difficult. For these reasons, I feel free to propose this addition to the resolution:

With the goal of putting an end most energetically to colonial and expansionist policy, Congress stresses in particular the duty of the comrades of the great capitalist powers and nations to come into contact with the Social Democracy of the small, oppressed nations who are suffering from that policy, in order to facilitate their struggle against militarism and chauvinism.

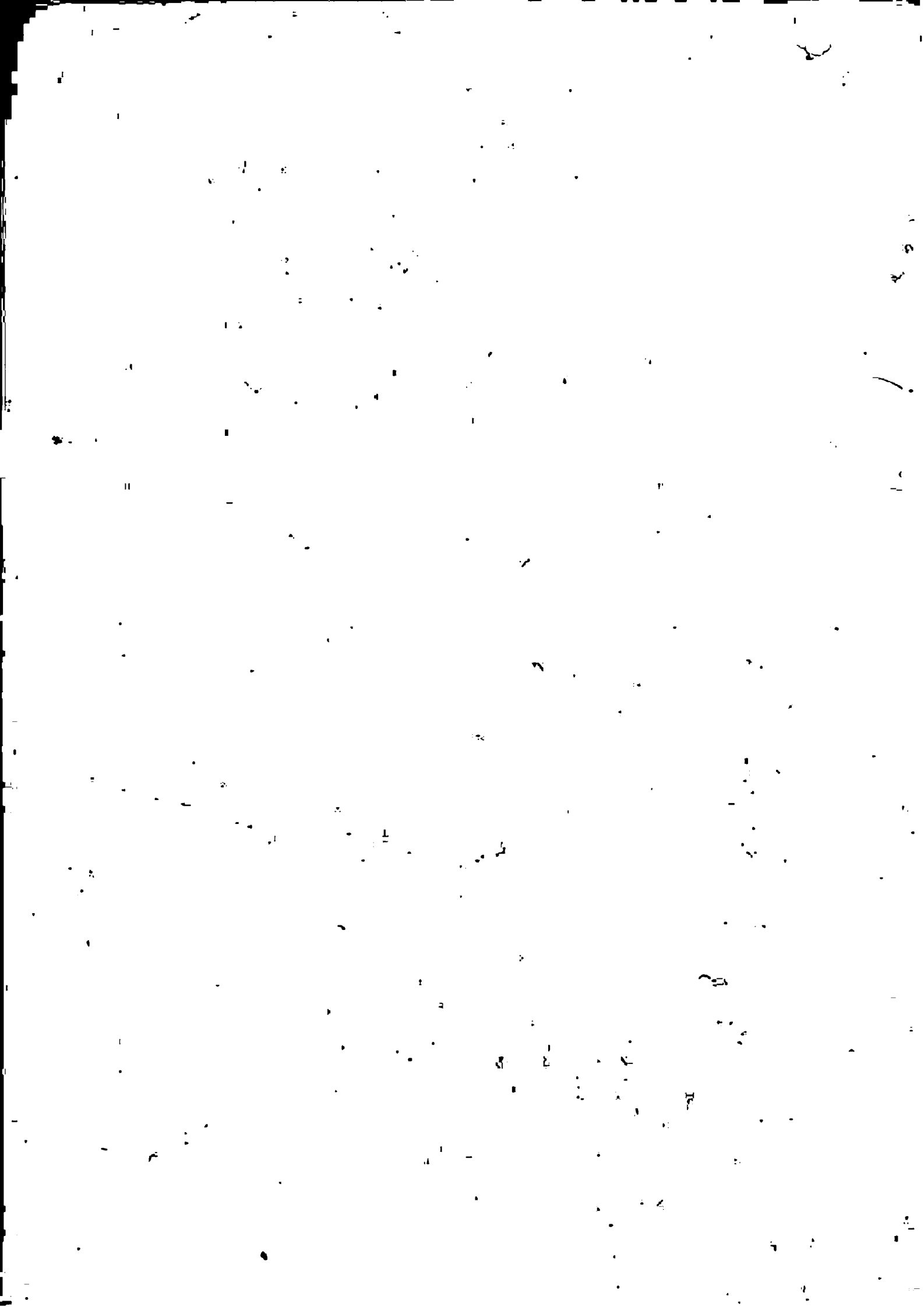
Karl Renner

COMRADE Tucović has stated here that we did not intervene sufficiently to demand the right of peoples to autonomy. I say, in the name of Austrian and Hungarian Social Democracy, and in the name of international Social Democracy, that we are all of the opinion that the peoples have the right to self-defence. In practice, all the Austrian and Hungarian socialists were in agreement on the question of Balkan policy. We demanded the autonomy of the Bosnian populations. Concerning the press, we fought against the Austro-Hungarian policy of plunder, and we struggled for peace. Adler⁵⁷ brought the whole of parliament to uproar while outlining our point of view. We fought imperialism in Austria. But the whole of the European and American press seemed to believe that Austria was so weak militarily that the Balkan peoples could easily have been the victors.

We dispelled this illusion, and thus averted a great danger. We are neither the servants of the Habsburgs, nor the friends of Karadjordje,⁵⁸ nor the vassals of Montenegro; we want the peoples to govern themselves, and this is the reason why we have demanded for them universal suffrage, pure and simple. What has caused confusion in men's minds is the complexity of the Balkan problem, which can be seen from a variety of viewpoints. It is possible that we invoked the Treaty of Berlin in our press, but in that case we invoked it as a fact, and not a right. A socialist should never recognise a treaty that is the result of violence. We only recognise the living right of all the peoples to existence.

57. Viktor Adler, the Austrian Party leader. See note 10 above.

58. Karadjordje (1752-1817) was leader of the Serbian Revolution of 1804 against the Turks. His descendants formed the Karadjordjević dynasty.



In the interests of peace, we have shown that war does not end with victory, but defeat. As far as the Tucović proposal is concerned, we have taken account of it in the conclusion to our resolution, and I ask him not to reproduce his proposition in the plenary assembly. We cannot codify here all our demands against the war. Here we can only show our agreement. We have our general programme and the programmes of the different countries.

In parliament, foreign policy is the responsibility of the Delegations.⁵⁹ However, before their convocation, the socialist delegates to the parliament had a meeting where all the nations of Austria were represented with the Executive Committee of all the parties, and there we decided our attitude with regard to the annexation question, and there we drafted our declaration based on the principle of the autonomy of nations and hostility towards the policy of Aehrenthal. It is possible that there were slight differences of opinion in the press. But the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* recorded both the Austrian policy and the exaggerations of the British and Russians.

59. See note 33 above.

VI: The Balkan Federation and Balkan Social Democracy

Introduction

AS the Balkan socialist parties came to play a greater rôle in the political life of their countries, they increasingly felt the need to come together to adopt a common approach to the national question in the Balkans and for organisational unity in their common struggle for a Balkan federation. The resulting plan to hold a conference of all the Balkan socialist parties was given new impetus by the explosive situation in the Balkans following the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary.¹ The conference was also intended to counteract the opportunist stance of the Austrian socialists during the annexation crisis, and thus as a means of winning over the International to the struggle for a Balkan federation.²

In this respect, the intervention of Kautsky, the most respected Marxist authority of the day was considered seminal by the Balkan socialists, and it inspired them to outline their own positions on the Balkan Question.³ In 'The National Tasks of Socialists Among the Balkan Slavs' (see below),⁴ specially written for the Balkan socialists and first published in December 1908, Kautsky

1. The idea of such a conference was first discussed and agreed on in a private meeting of the representatives of the Balkan socialist parties at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International in 1907. See Dragisa Lepčević, *Rat i Srpska Socijalna Demokracija (War and Serbian Social Democracy)*, Belgrade, 1925, p.26.
2. See Dimităr Blagoev, 'Balkanskata sotsialdemokratscheska konferentsiya' ('The Balkan Social Democratic Conference'), *Novo Vreme*, 1 (14) January 1910, *Selected Works* (Collected Works), Volume 13, Sofia, 1960, p.531.
3. In a review of Kautsky's article, Blagoev said: 'It is exceptionally instructive for us... Kautsky ends up confirming our opinions on the tasks of Social Democracy in Bulgaria, as well as on the events in the Balkan Peninsula.' (Ibid, p.241)
4. Kautsky's article was originally commissioned by the Bulgarian Narrows as an introduction to the Bulgarian translation of his *The Republic and Social Democracy in France* (1906). The fact that the German original of this article was first published in *Der Kampf (Struggle)*, the theoretical journal of the Austrian social democrats, suggests that Kautsky sought to win the Austrian socialists and the Second International to the idea of a Balkan federation.

argued that their historic task in the struggle for socialism was the creation of a Balkan federal republic.⁵ Kautsky considered the problem of national unification in the Balkans in terms of unblocking the process of capitalist development in the region, which he held to be tending towards the unification of different nations in large, multinational states. The main external barrier to unification remained the vassal relationship of the Balkan states to Russian Tsarism. Thus, the future Balkan federation would be directed against Russia. Internally, the main barrier was the Balkan monarchies and their dynastic interests.

The Resolutions (see below) of the First Balkan Socialist Conference that met in Belgrade on 7-9 January 1910 differed with Kautsky regarding the barriers to a Balkan federation.⁶ In terms of external barriers, the emphasis was not on Tsarism, but on the system of imperialism.

The Serbian socialist leader Dimitrije Tucović, in his article 'The First Balkan Social Democratic Conference' (see below), written at Kautsky's request and published in *Die Neue Zeit* in March 1910, drove this point home. Tucović ridiculed those 'foreign comrades' for whom the national movements in the Balkans were simply the tools of Tsarism. Against such socialists, and also against Kautsky, who still thought of international politics as a struggle between Great Powers pursuing dynastic-territorial ambitions, a struggle in which socialists must always oppose Tsarist Russia, Tucović saw that, with the victory of capitalism across the globe, the Great Powers had become the instruments of a single imperialist system. Hence, it was not *Tsarist* Russia that was the problem *as such*, either in the Balkans or internationally, but *imperialism* as a whole.

In terms of internal barriers, Tucović followed Kautsky in singling out the dynasties.⁷ By contrast, the emphasis in the Resolutions was not, as for Kautsky, on dynasticism as such, but on the alliance between the Balkan *bourgeoisie* and the dynasties.⁸ This reflected differing assessments of the rôle of the bourgeoisie in

5. Kautsky appeared to accept that the national aspirations of the Austrian South Slavs could be realised through unification with their Balkan compatriots in a Balkan federation. Typically for Kautsky, this was an abstract hypothesis, and not a practical guide to action. In his commentary on the annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary, he did not call for the right to self-determination to the point of separation for the peoples of Bosnia. See 'Österreich und Serbien' ('Austria and Serbia'), *Die Neue Zeit*, Volume 27, 1908-09, pp860-3.
6. The participants were the socialist parties of Serbia, Bulgaria (Narrows), Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the socialist groups of Macedonia (Skopje, Bitola and Salonika), Turkey (the Armenian social democratic Henschakan Party) and Montenegro. The Greeks sent a telegram of solidarity. The Bulgarian Broad socialists and the Workers' Federation of Salonika were excluded at the insistence of the Narrows, resulting in the boycott by Rakovsky and the Romanian socialists in protest (who however confided their mandate to the Serbs).
7. Tucović did not even mention the Balkan bourgeoisie in the article we include here. Following the annexation crisis, the emphasis of the Serbian socialists was resolutely anti-imperialist. However, a year later Tucović was arguing that the policy of the conquest of the Balkan states reflected the rise to power of the Balkan bourgeoisie. See 'Balkanska Konferencija' ('The Balkan Conference'), *Barba (Struggle)*, 1 (14) December 1911, in Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana Dela (Collected Works)*, Volume 5, Belgrade, 1980, pp575-7. Even Blagoev repeated Kautsky's argument on one occasion. See 'Balkanskiyat voprois' ('The Balkan Question'), *Novi Vrem*, August-September 1909, in Dimitar Blagoev, *Sŭbornenye*, Volume 13, Sofia, 1960, p386.
8. At the insistence of the Narrows, two sentences criticising the policy of the Balkan bourgeoisie

resolving the outstanding problems of the bourgeois revolution, including the national question, differences that would later resurface amongst the Balkan socialists.

Just as absolutism in the sphere of international politics, for example, that of Tsarist Russia, prevented the peaceful development of capitalism that heralded the inevitable victory of socialism, so for Kautsky dynasticism in Austria-Hungary and the Balkans prevented the resolution of the national question.⁹ For Kautsky in 'The National Tasks of Socialists Among the Balkan Slavs', the national idea could either lead to the unification of a nation in a state, or its separation from an existing state. However, the latter was less and less in evidence, as it conflicted with capitalism's tendency towards economic integration that found political expression in the unification of different nations in large states. This economic determinism enabled him to avoid the problem of bourgeois nationalism, that is, the desire of each of the Balkan bourgeoisies to dominate the region, unlike the Balkan socialists, who were clearly aware of its divisive force. For the latter, the weakness of capitalist development in the Balkans meant that the bourgeoisie was dependent on the dynasties to ensure its class rule, and this enabled the territorial aspirations of the former and the dynastic aspirations of the latter to fuse in the idea of 'national unification'. This meant that the hold of imperialism over the Balkans was reinforced rather than challenged by the nationalist struggles of the Balkan bourgeoisie.

Hence Kautsky's demand for a Balkan federal *republic* had quite different implications for the tendency within Balkan socialism to which Tucović and Blagoev belonged. They argued that the removal of the dynasties did not mean that economic tendencies towards national unification would inevitably come to fruition, but rather that the leading rôle of the *proletariat* in the democratic revolution would give it the necessary power to compel the bourgeoisie to go down the road of the Balkan federation. Only the proletariat could realise existing tendencies to national unification.

But there was another tendency in Balkan socialism that was much closer to the spirit of Kautsky's position, and which defended the idea of a Balkan confederation. It included the Romanian socialists, the left wing of the Broad socialists, the IMRO left and the Workers' Federation of Salonika, and its main exponent was Christian Rakovsky.¹⁰

and emphasising the principle of the class struggle of the proletariat were inserted into the Resolutions, whose emphasis had been on imperialism and Balkan dynasticism as barriers to the national unification of the Balkan peoples. Tucović admits as much (*op cit*, p580)

9. For Kautsky's argument with respect to the national question in Austria, see 'Der Kampf der Nationalitäten und das Staatsrecht in Österreich' ('The Struggle of Nationalities and State Right in Austria'), *Die Neue Zeit*, Volume 16, no 1, 1897, pp516-24, 557-64.

10. The mainstream of the reformist Broaders seem to have rejected the idea of the Balkan federation as utopian, given the nationalism of the Balkan bourgeoisie, relegating it to one of the tasks of socialist society. Under capitalism, the idea had a certain propaganda value. See Janko Sakasoff (Yanko Sakuzov), 'Neoslawismus, Balkanföderalismus und die Sozialdemokratie' ('Neoslavism, Balkan Federalism and Social Democracy'), *Der Kampf*, 1 February 1911.

In his article 'Towards a Balkan Entente' (see below) of December 1908, Rakovsky claimed, like Kautsky, that there were objective tendencies driving the process of national unification in the Balkans. As far as political factors were concerned, the Young Turk revolution, by introducing a constitutional regime, had removed the main source of the national antagonism amongst the Balkan states, namely Macedonia. At the same time, the grip of the Great Powers on the region was loosening. In terms of economic factors, by drawing the Balkan states together in a web of commercial relationships, the development of capitalism would bring them together politically in an alliance, that is, a Balkan *confederation*. Downplaying the problem of Balkan bourgeois nationalism noted above, Rakovsky concluded that the Balkan dynasties and governments could not ultimately hold back the march of progress, thus opening the perspective of national unification from above. This was pure reformism.

Dimităr Blagoev, in his article 'Political Prospects' (see below) of June 1909, rejected the argument that the Balkan bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class capable of achieving national unification. The weakness of capitalism in the region forced it to compromise with dynastic interests and seek an outlet in a nationalist policy of militarism and conquest. The further development of capitalism would have contradictory effects. On the one hand, it created the basis for economic unification through a Balkan customs union, and on the other, it increased dependency on European capitalism, and thus intensified the nationalist competition between the bourgeoisies. Hence there was no inevitable tendency to national unification. Which of these two paths the bourgeoisie followed was a purely political question, that is, it depended on the class struggle of the proletariat. This was the revolutionary perspective of national unification from below.

A clash between these two perspectives became inevitable, and in 1911 Rakovsky and Blagoev locked horns on the question of whether the path to national unification ran through a Balkan federation or confederation.

In 'The Balkan Confederation and the Turkish-Bulgarian Defensive Alliance' (see below) of October 1911, Rakovsky backed the demands of a fraction of the Young Turks for such an alliance, and dismissed the objections of *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, the paper of the Narrows, that it would be directed against Serbia. In his view it would be a step in the direction of a *Balkan confederation*, that is, an alliance between the Balkan states and Turkey based on the principle of the mutual defence of each other's territorial integrity and political independence.¹¹ Moreo-

11. Rakovsky's reasoning was circular: 1) without the external threat to the Balkans from the Great Powers, there would, in the final analysis, be no basis for a Balkan confederation; 2) logically, then moves to unification would probably first take the form of a defensive alliance between some of these states; 3) because such alliances reflected an objective need for independence from imperialism they would of necessity lay the basis for a Balkan confederation. See KR (Christian Rakovsky) 'Za Balkanskata Konfederatsiya' ('On the Balkan Confederation'), *Napred (Forward)*, 12 October 1911. Arguably, Rakovsky was seeking to conciliate the Narrows and the Broads over the idea of the Balkan confederation (as part of his mission on behalf of the Second International to heal their split). The Broads regarded the Balkan federation as utopian, but might be won over if it could be shown that the common external danger was forcing the Balkan states to unite, and that such alliances would result in a Balkan confed-

ver, by defending the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, such an alliance would enable the democratic consolidation of the latter, thus presenting a mighty barrier to tendencies towards Great Power interference, war and territorial fragmentation on the Balkan Peninsula.

By contrast, for Blagoev the unification of the Balkan peoples depended not on the defence of the integrity of the Turkish state, but on its revolutionary overthrow. As we have seen (in the previous section), this did not imply any support for its territorial dismemberment, let alone for diplomatic combinations such as the one proposed by Rakovsky that would maintain the *status quo* of weak and divided petty statelets in the Balkans; that would enable the Turkish ruling class to consolidate its subjection of the non-Muslim nationalities of the empire, and threaten the independence of the Balkan nations. The Balkan federation could never come about through the nationalist struggles of the Balkan bourgeoisies against Turkey, which left the Balkan peoples divided and prostrate before imperialism, but only through the victory of the revolution in Turkey and the overthrow of the Ottoman ruling class.

More generally, Rakovsky's understanding of the process of national unification clearly reflected the stagist view of history characteristic of the Marxism of the Second International. As the Balkan confederation reflected the needs of the infancy of bourgeois society in the Balkans, it fell to the bourgeoisie to create it. The next stage, involving the creation of a deeper union, a Balkan federation, would be the work of the proletariat. The struggle for a federation must be put off so as not to prevent the more realistic confederation from being realised by the bourgeoisie. This argument resembled the views of Plekhanov and the Mensheviks on the Russian revolution; as a bourgeois revolution it was to be the work of the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat could not advance its own class objectives too soon, for fear of pushing the bourgeoisie into the arms of Tsarism.

In his outspoken attack on Rakovsky, 'The Balkan Conference and the Balkan Federation' (see below) of December 1911, Blagoev retorted that the nationalist diplomacy of the Balkan bourgeoisie should not be confused with the struggle to unify the Balkan peoples. Indeed, the various schemes for a Balkan confederation promoted by Rakovsky led to ever greater divisions amongst the Balkan nations, and reinforced imperialism's hold over the region.

To Rakovsky's 'petit-bourgeois' Balkan *alliances*, Blagoev counterposed the idea of the *Balkan federal republic*, an economic, political and national *union* of the Balkan peoples in one state. Contrary to Rakovsky, it was precisely by pursuing its own class goals, and not making any concessions to the nationalist diplomacy of the bourgeoisie, that the proletariat would force through a truly democratic solution to the national question. This argument was close to the position of Lenin and the Bolsheviks *before 1917*. The coming revolution would be a bour-

eration. Equally, this realistic strategy might convince the Narrows to abandon their 'dogmatic and maximalist posture'.

geois revolution, but one made by the proletariat against the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

All the thinkers surveyed above in their different ways considered that the Balkan federation could be achieved under capitalism. For Kautsky and Rakovsky, there were powerful economic tendencies working towards a Balkan federation. For Blagoev and Tucović, given that capitalist development also promoted national conflict and war between the bourgeoisies, only the proletariat could realise the tendencies towards a Balkan federation.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 were to confirm this latter argument in its essentials. Firstly, they refuted the argument of Rakovsky. There was no evolutionary path to a Balkan confederation. The Balkan League was a short-term military *alliance* with the quite different and limited purpose of destroying and dividing up Turkey-in-Europe. The Second Balkan War of 1913 confirmed the prediction of the Bulgarian and Serbian socialists that the Balkan states would inevitably turn on one another over the spoils of war. It thus confirmed their view that the Balkan bourgeoisie was unable to achieve a Balkan federation.

However, believing the Balkan bourgeoisie to be too weak ever to act independently of imperialism, Blagoev and Tucović underestimated its ability, in the absence of a proletarian solution and under very specific international circumstances, to offer its own solution to the problem of national unification, however limited, miserable and short-term. The partition of Turkey-in-Europe amongst the Balkan allies at the end of the First Balkan War in 1913 represented just such a solution. The first, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia (1918-41) represented another, where national unification was permitted and even promoted by the Great Powers (Britain and France). The second Yugoslavia (1945-1991), born of a national revolution, owed its survival in large part to the fact that the Cold War division of spheres of influence in the Balkans enabled it to play off the superpowers against one another.

The fact that none of these lasted confirms the general argument of Blagoev and Tucović that the nationalist struggle of the Balkan bourgeoisies and the weakness of the Balkan states vis-à-vis imperialism precluded real and lasting national unification. The success of their projects for national unification and territorial conquest has always depended and still depends today on either Great Power deadlock or Great Power sponsorship. And what is given one day can always be taken away another. This suggests that the creation of a real and lasting Balkan federation is bound up with the abolition of capitalist society. The revolution must be made permanent.

Andreja Živković

Karl Kautsky

The National Tasks of Socialists Among the Balkan Slavs¹²

THE position of socialists in an economically undeveloped country in which the proletarian class struggle plays only an insignificant rôle as yet, is not straightforward. There, as elsewhere, they must firstly be extremely active in representing the interests of the proletariat. However, if this class only exists in an embryonic state, then the task of socialists lies more in fighting for its *future* interests than its *present* ones, less in *carrying on* the class struggle than in *preparing* the ground for it. This task also consists in striving for the full independence of the nation. Without such independence, the proletarian class struggle cannot develop in its full vigour.

Independence means *democracy*, means *freedom from any kind of foreign domination*, and means *bringing all the parts of the nation together in one, common state*. The warriors of the great French Revolution fought with the same energy for all these aspects of their nation's independence. The battle for the republic also became a battle for the unity and indivisibility of the republic and for defence against the external enemy.

This was how, at a time when the German proletariat was still weak, and when it was less a case of waging the class struggle than of preparing the ground for it, the founders of German socialism, Marx, Engels and Lassalle,¹³ struggled with equal resolve for democracy and the unification of Germany, for its independence from all outside domination.

However, clear though this task may be, it is often complicated by the fact that it is not simply democratic elements that work to bring the nation together and to free it from foreign rule but also anti-democratic ones, meaning that democracy and nationalism can come into conflict with one another. It was in this

12. From *Der Kampf*, 1 December 1908. Translated from the German by Barbara Rampoldi. *Der Kampf*, *Sozialdemokratische Monatsschrift* (*The Struggle: Social Democratic Monthly*), the theoretical journal of Austrian Social Democracy, 1907-34, was founded and edited by Otto Bauer and Karl Renner. An editorial note in the original stated: 'The present article is drawn from the preface that Comrade Kautsky wrote for the Bulgarian translation of his book *The Republic and Social Democracy in France*.' The latter first appeared as 'Republik und Sozialdemokratie in Frankreich', *Die Neue Zeit*, Volume 23, no 1, 1904-05, pp9-15. The Bulgarian translation appeared as K Kautski, *Republikata v Frantsiya i sozialdemokratiya*, Sofia, 1909.

13. Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), the founder of the modern German labour movement, was a proponent of the idea that the bourgeois state was a ready-made mechanism for socialist transformation.

way that Napoleon III, Alexander II,¹⁴ Bismarck¹⁵ and Cavour¹⁶ attempted to make nationalist movements serve the ends of dynastic interests. It then becomes the job of socialists not to allow themselves to be deceived or distracted by national illusions, but to be emphatic in their criticism of them.

Dynastic interests in a nation may sometimes help to shake off foreign rule and to unite its divided elements. However, these same interests can very easily cause the process of unification to be carried out in a manner which prevents the full strength of the nation from being deployed and thus the most successful outcome to this process. Dynastic and national interests are never exactly the same.

Thus, the dynastic interests of the Hohenzollerns, though they may at a given point in time have encouraged the consolidation of the German nation, were at the same time an obstacle to its complete unification. The unification of all the Germans would first have required the destruction of Austria, an undertaking which would have met with such massive resistance from so many different quarters that it would only have had any prospect of success if it had been accompanied by the sort of immensely powerful and ruthless unleashing of all the energies of a people that only a democratic revolution can bring about.

The dynastic interests of the Hohenzollerns would have been ill-served if this had happened, and precisely because of this they took good care not to endeavour to unite the whole German nation. However, there was also a further consideration urging them in the same direction, which was that in the event of any such unification, the Old Prussian population, the only group upon whose traditional obedience the Hohenzollerns could count, would have become a minority in the German Empire and as a result the Hohenzollern Empire, even had it been achievable under such circumstances, would have been established on a very shaky basis.

Hence it was precisely because a German dynasty undertook the unification of Germany that unification could not be complete. Only a democratic revolution would have been able to achieve complete national unification.

The position today in the Balkans is similar. The Bulgarian nation needs independence from foreign rule and national unification. However, like so many other nations, its misfortune is that so far this process has not been accomplished by democratic revolutions, but by dynastic intrigues. What this means is not only that the extension of unification and independence goes hand in hand with a reduction in internal democracy, but also that national unification is incomplete because the Bulgarians of *Macedonia* are excluded from it.

14. Alexander II (1818-1881) was the Tsar of Russia (1855-81) who championed the cause of South Slavs in order to advance Russian power over Turkey.
15. Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was the conservative Prussian statesman who initially opposed the liberal German nationalism of the 1848 revolution, only to become as Prime Minister of Prussia (1863-71) the architect of German unification through the path of 'blood and iron', the wars of 1864-71.
16. Count Camillo Benso Cavour (1810-1861) was an Italian statesman, premier (1852-59, 1860-61) of the Kingdom of Sardinia, and the motivating force behind the unification of Italy under the House of Savoy.

As long as Bulgaria is under dynastic rule, the only way in which the Bulgarians of Macedonia can unite with their compatriots is if the Kingdom of Bulgaria conquers their country. However Macedonia is not inhabited simply by Bulgarians but also by Serbs, Greeks and Turks. Any attempt by Bulgaria to conquer Macedonia would meet with resistance from all the other Balkan states, which together are superior to it; it cannot be accomplished without outside help, or, in other words, without Bulgaria making itself subject to foreign dependence. Given its national diversity, the conquered country would also be the same source of constant debilitation to the Bulgarian Empire as it is today to the Turkish Empire.

There is only one way in which the Bulgarian nation can achieve complete national unification, by which the Bulgarians of Macedonia can be united with their brothers, without the need for outside help to Bulgaria and without provoking eternal struggles with the Serbs, Greeks and Turks, and that is for *all the nations of the Balkan peninsula to be united in a federal republic*.

If the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks and Turks together formed a single state, then their compatriots in Macedonia, united with their nations, could lead a national and state existence, without the need for any one of these nationalities to meet with resistance from all the other Balkan nationalities. United in a federal state of this kind, all the nations on the Balkan peninsula would for the first time become really independent of foreign countries, whereas previously they could only buy their independence from the Sultan by making themselves vassals of the Tsar, or Austria or England. They would then constitute a powerful empire which could refuse to tolerate any meddling from outside. The formation of such a large internal market would also greatly accelerate the economic development of those regions, and in many cases would make it possible for the first time.

It should not be thought that the idea of the nation state makes such a federal state impossible.

The idea of the nation state contains two tendencies: firstly, towards the bringing together of all the parts of a nation to form one state, and, secondly, towards the dividing off of one nation from other nations to form its own state. Of these two tendencies, there is less and less evidence of the latter, because it conflicts with the direction which economic development tends to take, namely for nations to draw increasingly close together and for large states to become dominant, not only in political terms, which has always been the case, but also in economic terms. This is the driving force behind all sorts of coalitions and alliances between peoples and states.

Where states are not yet, or are no longer, firmly established, or are not yet ossified, where people feel that the process of state formation has not yet been completed or that a new process is underway, then these tendencies for all groups who speak the same language to unite in a single state will not be frustrated, but, on the contrary, will be reinforced by this development. However, bringing together all the members of a nation who have up till now lived on the territories of different states into a single state is only one of the possible ways in

which the state can be enlarged without going against the national principle. Another way is for a number of compact nations to be combined into one common state. Certainly, for the same physical size, a nation state is massively superior to a multinational state, and certainly the latter will contradict the trends of national development as long as it consists only of parts of nations, most of whose members live outside the state. Yet for small national groups which in their entirety live together in a single territory, the formation of a state on this territory is the only possible way of enjoying the benefits of a large state. These advantages will outweigh the disadvantages from which the multinational state suffers in comparison with the nation state.

For small national groups, a union of this kind becomes all the more necessary the more uncertain are the conditions in which they live and the more vigorously they have to fight for their existence; but it is also necessary the more economically backward they are and the more that economic development makes large states far superior to small ones. It is also easier to bring about such a union where states are not yet ossified, and where they are still in a state of flux, or in other words not where the tendencies of the modern mode of production have long been affecting the life of the state, but where they are only just taking hold. This is why Eastern Europe may be able to precede the West in this respect. It is in Eastern Europe where we find the most powerful strivings to unite not only the divided fragments of a nation but also different nations in a single state. Of course, only those nations that have already achieved national unification, or which are only able to do so by uniting with other nations in a single state, will be able to strive wholeheartedly for unity with other nations in a single state.

Austria shows us that national sentiment need not oppose the unification of several nations in one state. Among its nations, there is none that surpasses the Hungarians and Czechs in national sentiment. And yet it is precisely these two highly chauvinistic nations which are most strongly resistant to the break-up of Austria into independent nation states, and which are most interested in seeing Austria — or at least a half-Austria — continue to exist. The sole separatist elements are those that only represent parts of a nation, that is, most of whose members lie outside Austria: Germans, Poles, Italians, Serbs, Rumanians and Ruthenes. Nor would any of these elements wish to exist on their own as separate states, and their striving to belong to a large state is not in contradiction with their separation from Austria, because even without Austria it would still be possible for them to form a large state with their compatriots.

Therefore, the national idea need not be an obstacle to the unification of the Balkan peoples in a federal state. It may in fact draw fresh strength from such a state. A strong Balkan empire would, for example, have a far better chance of uniting the Serbs who are today ruled by Austria with the other Serbs than would either of the existing Serbian dwarf monarchies.¹⁷

17. A reference to the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, which in this period both vied for leadership over the Serbian national movement.

It is not the nationalist idea that stands in the way of bringing together the Balkan peoples into one state, but *dynastic* interests. These peoples can unite as equals in a *democratic* manner. As long as the dynasties exist, it will only be possible for each of these nations to come together to form a state if one of the dynasties is victorious over the others in a war. Under these circumstances, this would be tantamount to the victory of one nation over the others. It therefore presupposes a state of war that would last all the longer, would be all the more exhausting and would end with fewer achievements, the less the possibility was of any of the four main nations gaining any decisive victory over the other three combined.

As long as the Balkan dynasties exist, the Balkan peoples will therefore not only be incapable of fully achieving their national unification, but will also be condemned to remain fragmented into petty statelets, will remain restricted in their economic development, and will always be externally dependent. They will have their dynasties to thank for this.

The worst form of external dependence, however, is the vassal relationship existing between the Balkan Slavs and the Tsar of Russia. It is this relationship that the socialists among the Balkan Slavs have to fight against, not just as one of their national obligations, but also as one of their international obligations.

One of their most important tasks is to meet these obligations. If the economic backwardness of their country prevents them from devoting themselves fully to the proletarian class struggle, if in practice it is more a question of having to prepare the ground for this class struggle and if the struggle for national independence can play a large part in this, they must also not forget that the proletariat can only wage its class struggle successfully as an international struggle. As the rising class to which the future belongs, the proletariat must always support the future interests of society as a whole which, given the present-day state of world commerce, are increasingly becoming identical with the interests of the whole of mankind. It is above all these interests that socialists in every country must bear in mind, and must be their guiding star even when they have cause to participate in national struggles. The supreme consideration for socialists is not the good of any particular nation, but, like the individual good, it too must be subordinated to the interests of the development of society as a whole.

It is of course our conviction that the best foundation for the all-round development of each individual and also of each nation lies in a socialist society. And of course today we are fighting for equal rights for individuals and nations. We are well aware, however, that in today's society the interests of the individual may very well come into conflict with those of the collective, and in such cases we call for the individual interest to be sacrificed to the general interest. However, we must also demand this in the case of nations. This is where the attitude of social democrats to nations differs from that of the bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie, the nation is sovereign, and the good of the nation is the highest law — unless it is the individual that he puts on a pedestal. For us, the good of international society stands higher. We are no more anti-national than we are op-

posed or even indifferent to the individual. However, the good of our nation is not the *supreme* consideration determining our actions.

Marx and Engels always viewed the national strivings of the Balkan Slavs from this truly international point of view. They subordinated them to the fight against Russian Tsarism, the supreme international obligation of the entire international proletariat, because Tsarism is the greatest and most dangerous opponent of the advance of democracy and the proletariat throughout the world.

Insofar as the Balkan Slavs strove to free themselves from the Turkish yoke by methods which entailed a strengthening and extension of Russian absolutism, they met with opposition from Marx and Engels. Yet this position did not apply simply to the Slavs. Our two masters were also opposed, for example, to any encouragement of *Italian* nationalist strivings where these involved calling on Napoleon III for help, and thereby strengthening Bonapartism.

Marx and Engels had to carry on their struggles against Tsarist ambitions in the Balkan Peninsula mainly in England. In their day, Britain was the power most capable of resisting Russian absolutism, whose foreign policy was most likely to be influenced by popular movements. It was also, however, the very country where the Liberals always tended to let themselves be taken in by the ringing phrases of Tsarism, and where, at the same time, the proletariat was totally politically dependent on the Liberals.

Today, we have progressed considerably. After the latest events, there is no chance that Tsarism will still be able to deceive anyone anywhere with liberal phrases, or will even try to. Yet this is the very time when the radical Liberals of England have struck up a close friendship with it.

In contrast with such debasement, there is, however, the elevating spectacle of the mass of organised English proletarians who have broken free of Liberalism and organised themselves into an independent party, a party that is the most determined enemy of Tsarism.

However, what is even more encouraging is the fact that the struggle against Tsarism is no longer simply one of foreign policy because Russian absolutism is threatened far more by revolution from within than by democratic powers from without.

And there is also a third fact that has arisen since the time when Marx and Engels were active which similarly demonstrates the enormous progress we have made since then. Among the Balkan Slavs themselves there are now socialists who are well aware of their international obligations, and who know that it would be a disgrace if any Slav democratic party called on the Russian Tsar for help in furthering its national aims, or any aims whatsoever. And that is not just something that our brothers in the Balkans recognise in theory; they are guided by this principle in their actions.

And such activity may again become vital, especially now when Pan Slavist¹⁸

18. Pan Slavism was an intellectual, cultural and political movement that reached its zenith in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Inspired by the idea of a Slavonic federation of all the Slav peoples of Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Russia, it became notorious as a tool of Tsarist foreign policy.

tendencies are again emanating from Russia. It appears that the Tsar really has triumphed over his people, for they lie prostrate on the ground, bleeding from a thousand wounds. Yet despite its victory, absolutism is fully conscious of its weakness; it knows how precarious this victory is, and how absolutely essential it is for the survival of Tsarism that the deep gulf that has opened up between the 'little father' and his subject children be bridged. In the long run, it will be too painful for him to sit enthroned on bayonets; he needs an idea that will allow him to assume once again the guise of the defender of his people's interests and will give him renewed prestige, while at the same time diverting attention from the misery and poverty within the country. It is this idea that good old Panslavism is intended to supply. To reimpose order at home — barely maintained at present — the Tsar is attempting to foment disorder among his neighbours, in Austria and in Turkey. The alleged freedom movement in the one place is intended to help stifle the real freedom movement in the other.

And in fact, if it were only a question of the Slav liberals, then the gamble would succeed. The Russian liberals appear ready to become intoxicated with Panslavist enthusiasm and Russian patriotism, and both the Czech and South Slav liberals, especially the Serbian liberals,¹⁹ are not slow in reciprocating.

Nevertheless, it would seem that this intoxication with Panslavism is soon going to be followed by a bad hangover. Today, an aggressive foreign policy cannot be prosecuted without a strong army that is ready to strike at any moment. The Russian army, already disorganised by the defeats in Manchuria, has been totally demoralised by its victories over the revolution.²⁰ These were only made possible by the removal of all the intelligent and decent elements from the officer corps, and by undermining any sense of honour among the mass of the men. Today, the Russian army is nothing more than an enormous Black Hundred²¹ in uniform, a gang prepared to rob and murder innocents, but not an army that is capable of standing up to thinking and determined fighting men, or prepared to die fighting for an idea against opponents who can defend themselves.

Russian Panslavism today is probably still capable of inciting unrest and greedy ambitions among the neighbouring peoples, but it can no longer offer them any serious help. The Tsar will be forced to leave his protégés in the lurch and betray them, and in this way his Panslavic policy, which was intended to renew his prestige both at home and abroad, will in the end reveal all the more forcefully his impotence, not to mention the outright danger he presents to the

19. Kautsky is probably referring to the Serbian Radical Party (established in 1881), the first modern political party in Serbia. Founded by the followers of the socialist Svetozar Marković, this party waged a bitter struggle against the Obrenović despotism, laying the basis for constitutional government in Serbia after 1903. By this time, it had become the party of government, and in this capacity was to lead Serbia to victory in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

20. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 was fought to carve out spheres of influence in the Far East, mainly at the expense of China. Russia's defeat led directly to the first Russian Revolution in 1905.

21. Black Hundreds was the popular name for the paramilitary street-fighting groups formed to combat the forces of the left by the Union of the Russian People, the principal organisation set up by the forces of the right in the aftermath of the 1905 Russian Revolution.

whole of Slavdom. There is little likelihood that the corpse of Russian absolutism can be brought back to life. Any such attempt will show, even more clearly than before, that what we have here is not a giant ready for the fray, but a crumbling colossus.

Still, old memories often play a part, not just in sentimental poetry, but also in practical politics, and in the present critical situation they may seduce many Balkan Slavs into seeing in the slaughterer of all the Russians the Tsar-Liberator, and thus into providing him, albeit only temporarily, with a certain moral support.

It goes without saying that today our South Slav comrades have more reason than ever to oppose such views, both in the interests of their own nations and in the interests of the international revolution.

However, what all this shows us is that even in countries which do not as yet have a strong proletariat, where the proletarian class struggle does not as yet play any rôle, and where the socialists do not appear in practice to have advanced beyond the stage of acting simply as democrats — that even here, socialism, with its proletarian standpoint, is developing a particular outlook even in purely democratic and national matters which sets it apart from bourgeois democracy, and stops it from being submerged into the latter.

Nowhere is it too early for the proletariat to be taught to organise independently of bourgeois democracy, and to make its own independent assessment of things. This is particularly necessary during a revolutionary period, such as today exists on the Balkan Peninsula, when everything is in a state of constant change and the foundations are being laid for new political structures that are destined to govern the forms of development for a long time to come.

Resolution of the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference²²

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UNDER the enforced guardianship and the preponderating influence of European diplomacy, the instrument of the political expansion of European capitalism, territorial and national relations have been created in the his-

22. Held in Belgrade, 7-9 January 1910. From *Radničke Novine* (*Workers' News*), 29 December 1909 (11 January 1910), the paper of the Serbian Social Democratic Party, 1902-19. Translated from the Serbian by Andrej Živković.

torical past of south-east Europe, and especially on the Balkan peninsula, which hinder the modern economic and cultural development of the peoples, and are most sharply opposed to their interests and their needs. From this contradiction arise all those crises, perturbations and events which serve as pretexts for European diplomacy and its monarchist-reactionary agents in the Balkans, and to uphold their policy of interference, guardianship, conquest and reaction.

In opposition to this, the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference declares that the movements and struggles of the peoples of south-eastern Europe and the Balkans, who in fact possess all the cultural conditions for development, are the expression of the irresistible aspiration to *economic and political liberation*.

On the one hand, the faster that those regions designated as colonies and not yet oppressed by any of the powers were divided up, the more European capitalism, in order to invest the surplus from the exploitation of the proletariat at home, covetously attacked agrarian countries that were industrially backward and politically submissive. By way of interest payments on loans and super-profits from capital invested in enterprises enjoying unlimited concessions, trade agreements and a web of customs tariffs, European capitalism drew the Balkans and the countries and peoples of south-eastern Europe into the scope of its capitalist exploitation, exhausting their economic forces and preventing their development and progress, and imperilling their very survival.

On the other hand, with the changes that the victorious march of capitalism brought about in the conditions of economic life in these lands, the territorial and national fragmentation that today exists is becoming unbearable. All the progressive forces of the nation must strive to liberate themselves from the *particularism and insularity* that correspond solely to the patriarchal and limited character of life in the district and village, the *borders* that *frequently* divide up either peoples of the same language, same nationality and culture, or regions that are economically and politically interdependent — and through direct or indirect *foreign rule* rob the people of the ability to determine its own fate.

But while the proletariat through its class struggle in fact aids the realisation of these aspirations, the capitalist bourgeoisie, with the help of monarchism, under the existing economic, political and national conditions in south-eastern Europe, creates new national antagonisms that prevent the resolution of the Balkan Question by way of the unification of the peoples.

II

Recognising the *necessity and legitimacy* of the aspirations of the nations of south-east Europe, the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference takes the position that these can be realised only by *combining their economic forces into one whole, abolishing artificially drawn borders, and enabling them to live together in full reciprocity and in united defence against common danger*. For that reason, conference charges Social Democracy with the duty actively to suppress all antagonism among the peoples of south-east Europe and to work to bring them together. Conference also calls upon it wholeheartedly to assist all aspirations to *full democratic self-government by the*

people and to national independence, which are the prime condition if the lives of these nations are to be wrested out of the hands of their foreign and domestic reactionary masters, and the ground prepared for the joining of forces required for modern economic development as the only guarantee of economic and political independence. Social Democracy must be the first to wish for this, not only because such a solution would best suit the interests of overall social progress, but also because its own work is always conditioned by the development of the people within which it operates, and because the forces of the class struggle achieve their fullest development in independent countries and nations.

III

The First Balkan Social Democratic Conference declares in particular that these urgent changes cannot be carried out in the sense of the interests of the people either by the militarist policy of the Balkan monarchies and reactionary bourgeois regimes, which, on the contrary, stir up antagonism between nations, sow hatred and distrust, and destroy the economic and political powers of the people, or by leaning on or appealing to the European capitalist states, whose ruling classes, whether absolutist or republican, national or multinational, cannot and will not voluntarily give up their dominant positions and policy of conquest. As the political representative of the working classes, which are not divided by the national antagonisms of the ruling classes, Social Democracy has the important task of being the most conscious and the most resolute proponent of the idea of solidarity between the nations of south-eastern Europe and of strengthening, *through the class struggle of the proletariat, the powers of resistance of the peoples* towards the policy of conquest of European capitalism. This should primarily apply to the imperialist strivings of Austria-Hungary and the influence of Russian Tsarism, which throws itself the more impatiently into its bloody policy of blackmail in the Balkans the more it is pushed out of the Far East, and the more it finds itself at daggers drawn with its own people.

IV

It is the duty of the Secretaries of the Social Democratic parties of the Balkans and south-eastern Europe, through the Secretary of the Serbian Social Democratic Party in Belgrade and through constant close contacts with one another, to enable the carrying out of activities in the sense of this resolution in a uniform and planned manner. And it must elaborate for the next conference, which will be held in 1911 in Sofia, a formal programme of our political and national demands, as well as an outline of the organisational forms of the future association of the Social Democratic parties of the Balkans and south-eastern Europe.

Dimitrije Tucović

The First Balkan Social Democratic Conference²³

I

IN complete silence and without attracting the attention of the foreign press, the First Conference of the Balkan Social Democrats was held in Belgrade on 7, 8 and 9 January. Represented were the social democratic workers' movements of the Balkan countries and the South Slav peoples of Serbia, Bulgaria,²⁴ Romania, Turkey, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slavonia, Carinthia and Carniola. Greetings from Greece arrived in a telegram which declared solidarity with the comrades. In three days of work, the delegates endeavoured to deepen their views of *the Balkan Question*, to take a position and to prepare the ground for joint and planned Social Democratic action. The resolution was adopted unanimously with great enthusiasm, unanimity being far more in evidence on the question of the difficulties and dangers against which Social Democracy in all the represented nations has to fight against than in actual views.

It is difficult for a foreign comrade to understand what the Balkan Question means for us who are 'deep down there in Turkey'. To the fraternal parties abroad, this is a question which, at best arouses a purely *academic* interest and falls into the domain of so-called *foreign* policy, and forms part of their political activity only because it remains *open* and keeps providing new material for conflicts and entanglements of the widest possible international dimensions. This is why some comrades and party organs abroad naïvely thought that they could avert these dangers of war if they denied the historical justification of, and the need for, struggles and national movements in the Balkan peninsula, and ascribed these solely to foreign intrigue and the insatiable desire of the small Balkan monarchies to expand. Such comrades, in our view, are the only sincere proponents of the *status quo* in the Balkans, although this *status quo* of oppression, division and foreign rule has become unbearable to the Balkan peoples.

These *foreign* policy considerations, which for our comrades abroad were always decisive in their assessment of the Balkan Question, have for us, the South

23. Originally in *Die Neue Zeit*, 11 March 1910. Translated by Predrag Stojović from the Serbian version of this article in Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana Dela* [Collected Works], Volume 3, Belgrade, 1980, pp151-61.

24. Let us mention in passing that of the two Bulgarian Social Democratic Parties represented in the International, only the Social Democratic Workers Party of Bulgaria (the so-called 'Narrow') was represented at the conference. Serbian Social Democracy, which took upon itself the initiative of calling this conference, was unable to arrange the simultaneous attendance of both groups (author's note).

Slav socialists, had to take second place to the question of how to remove many obstacles and create more favourable conditions for the full and independent development of the nations in the Balkans. In the present circumstances, it would be utter madness for us to delight in the *status quo*. Even the danger of a Russian conquest of the Balkans, which always coloured the attitude of our great teachers towards the Balkan Slavs, must not blind us to the danger lurking on the other side. In the Balkans, the theory of the 'lesser evil' has been killed by the actions of all the capitalist states. The most successful advocate for Russian influence in the Balkans is its partner Austria, and vice versa.

A particular feature of our position *vis-à-vis* the Balkan Question is the striving to liberate ourselves from the *internal* difficulties in which we are languishing today. The Balkan population, formerly enslaved by Turkish feudalism, has today become the prey of European capitalism. Centuries of struggle by the *rayas*, the Christian subjects, against the Turkish pashas have resulted in the present geographic and political situation in the Balkans. This has been made more acute and complicated by the *intervention* of European diplomacy. European diplomacy, the instrument of the ruling classes, did not refrain from using every means to try to grab as much of Turkey's estate as possible, or to prevent others from proceeding with their own conquest. It waged wars against Turkey and for Turkey, incited and suppressed rebellions, and forced Balkan states into mutual wars and reconciliations. The list of misdeeds perpetrated by European diplomacy against the Balkan peoples is ominously long. Russia is the main culprit, but it is not the only one.

The unstoppable retreat of Turkish rule is, therefore, accompanied by the incessant self-serving tutelage and interference of European capitalism with its appetite for plunder. Under its influence, territorial and national relationships were formed in the Balkans which prevent the modern economic and cultural development of the people, and stand in sharp contrast to their interests and needs. Newly-imposed political borders divide peoples of the same tongue, nationality and culture, and also regions which economically and politically rely on one another and had previously lived as closely-knit communities. The peoples of the Balkans were unable to resist these tendencies to *oppress, split up and fragment them*, which prevented the modern development of economic, cultural and political forces, because the economy, which flourished in these parts in the Middle Ages, had been ruined by the redirection of global traffic towards the Atlantic Ocean. The popular masses were almost indifferent to the penetration of the Great Powers. The peasant, who had carried the revolutionary struggle against Turkish rule, became unable to carry the struggle for national unity and freedom as well. He does not feel harmed by national fragmentation because his political horizon does not extend beyond the borough and the village, or at best extends only to the nearest market. It is then easy to understand why, in the middle of the last century, when Austria was shaken to its foundations by national liberation movements, Serbian and Croatian peasants under Baron Jelačić rushed to the aid of Habsburg absolutism.²⁵ Not long after the Jelačić period, in

25. During the 1848 revolutions, the Habsburgs exploited South Slav hatred of their Hungarian

the days of the Serb-Turkish War²⁶, a rural deputy in the Serbian National Assembly protested against the war with the following words: 'Surely it is not going to increase my plot of land?' The patriarchal mentality and particularism complement one another perfectly.

It was therefore at the time of economic decline and narrow interests and views that this junkyard of South Slav principalities was created, together with the splendour of several dynasties and foreign rule. Parvus has said: 'The curse of Europe is its political past. Is not its political map a beggar's cloak — all patched up?'²⁷ The Balkans really is a beggar's cloak. It is difficult to make much use of it, but even more difficult to get rid of it. This patched cloak enjoys the protection of two powerful factors: European *diplomacy* and the *Balkan dynasties*. The first has had an interest in never allowing the *wellsprings of weakness and mutual rivalry in the Balkans, without which its 'friendly' tutelage would become redundant, to dry up*. Likewise dynasties, which thrive on particularism and perish with it, are as a rule more ready to hatch plots with the enemies of the freedom and independence of their own people than they are to broaden the foundation upon which their thrones rest.²⁸ The public has learned of the secret mutual defence treaty which King Milan concluded with Austria-Hungary in 1881, according to which Serbia, to the advantage of the Obrenović dynasty, renounces Bosnia-Herzegovina and any national agitation in those areas, only to seek compensation for this in 1885 in a mindless war against Bulgaria.²⁹

These pacts between European diplomacy and the dynasties are the source of many evils for the Balkan nations. They are one of the main sources of their antagonisms.

II

Militarily, the Balkan countries are highly developed states. But militarism and poverty are all they possess. From 1880 to date, Serbia has spent 650 million francs on the army, Bulgaria 940 million in the past two decades, and Romania 970 million between 1883 and 1906.³⁰ The same is true of Greece and Turkey.

overlords to win them to the counter-revolution. The Croatian leader, Ban Jelačić (1801-1859), encouraged by duplicitous Habsburg backing for Slav national rights, led a South Slav army against the Hungarian revolutionaries before assisting in the suppression of the revolution in Vienna.

26. The 1875 uprising in Herzegovina provoked such a wave of patriotic sentiment in Serbia that Prince Milan Obrenović (reigned 1868-1889) was forced to declare war on Turkey or face revolution. The 1876 war led to a humiliating defeat, Serbia only being saved from Ottoman invasion by Russian intervention.
27. A Parvus, *Die Kolonialpolitik und der Zusammenbruch*, p22 (Author's note). [*Colonialism and the Breakdown*, Leipzig, 1907]
28. Stojan M Probić, 'Tajna konvencija između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske' (Author's note) ['The Secret Convention between Serbia and Austria-Hungary']
29. The unification of Bulgaria with Eastern Rumelia in 1885 was, following the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, considered a body blow to Serbian interests. Egged on by Austria, Serbia declared war. Routinely defeated, it was saved from Bulgarian retribution this time by Austria.
30. Dr C Rakovski, *Vers l'Entente Balkanique*, p7 (Author's note). (See *The Balkan Entente*, reproduced below.)

The military budget, which 30 years ago was 7.2 million in Serbia, and 8.3 million in Bulgaria, now amounts to 26 million in Serbia, 39.8 million in Bulgaria, 50.5 in Romania, and 38.2 million in Greece (1907). Whereas the military expenditure of the six Great Powers has *doubled* since the 1870s,³¹ in Serbia it has increased *fourfold*, and in Bulgaria *fivefold*, since the 1880s!

But the great significance for the Balkan Question of this policy of militarist exertion lies not in the possible *military might* of the Balkan states, but in the *foreign debts* that have had to be incurred. These state debts have reached 1430 million francs in Romania, 2448 in European Turkey, 815 in Greece, 643 in Bulgaria, 696 in Serbia, and seven million francs in Montenegro, and the interest alone on these debts amounts to about 300 million per year.

In this way, these militarist state loans have become the main part of the influx of aid with which European capitalism has inundated the Balkan countries; they have become the main weapon foreign capitalism uses to conquer the Balkans. What is particularly striking about these debts is the fact that not only were they contracted in an *unproductive* manner, but the money they have brought has remained *abroad*. For the indebted countries they merely represent *the issuing of bonds, and the accumulation of purchasing rights* in the wallets of foreign capitalist groups.

Once down this road, there is no escape but through a radical turnaround. One government leaves to the next — in Marx's words — 'as the only part of the so-called national wealth truly owned by contemporary nations', a growing state debt which exhausts to the extreme the economic power of a nation, creates economic anaemia, and destroys the whole economy.

However, the greater the pawned part of the national product, the more every government endeavoured to increase state income by artificially propping up industry. The saving strategies that then emerge are *protective import duties and concessions*. No wheel turns in the Balkan countries without some privilege being involved, and the lion's share of this goes to foreign capital. It penetrates enterprises either directly or through banks, which very often have nothing Serbian, Bulgarian or Greek in them other than the name 'Serbian', 'Bulgarian' or 'Greek'. Under the influence of foreign capital, for years there was turmoil in economic life. The degradation of the forests and the construction of mines, railways and factories all show that a higher order of economy is being created. And the more this new, capitalist economy rises above the original economic methods of these agrarian countries, the greater its superiority, and the more unbridled and terrible is the exploitation it perpetrates. Built with foreign capital, this industry becomes a powerful *new* means by which foreign capital is able to exploit even faster and more intensively our raw manpower and untapped natural resources.

This *colonial* economic relationship of the Balkan countries with European capitalism could not, of course, fail to result in political consequences. The militarist policy of taking out loans has delivered these countries entirely into the hands of the financial oligarchy and arms manufacturers of Western Europe.

31. Emanuel Wurm, *Die Finanzgeschichte des Deutschen Reichs*, p24 (Author's note). [*The Financial History of the German Reich*]

And since financial and manufacturing magnates always collaborate with capitalist states, the governments of indebted countries can no longer have an influence on the interest rate of the loans, or on the cost of armaments; they can hardly say that they were at any time the true owners of these loans. Many a government has suddenly fallen because it had the misfortune to come into conflict with diplomatic representatives who served the profit motive of the capitalist groups of their own countries.

Diplomatic tutelage and interference in the internal affairs of these countries go even further. Of course, European capital will not enter such unstable countries without special concessions and guarantees as to regular interest payments. Instead of the system of state subsidies, which was introduced in Turkey to guarantee interest payments, the Balkan countries have devised a method less offensive to 'state independence', namely, to secure interest payments through customs. Behind the protective walls of customs duties, which the state introduced 'completely' independently, foreign capital is assured *an extra profit to the full value* of the customs duties levied, as it is invested in enterprises which are the only ones of a certain type in the country and so represent a real monopoly. For example, the sugar factory in Serbia, owned by a joint-stock company in Regensburg,³² has been granted all manner of economic concessions, and on top of that a 30-dinar customs duty, which brings it annually more than two million in extra profit at the expense of the consumer. Once they have secured all these concessions, capitalist groups, through the most unscrupulous pressure exerted by their diplomatic representatives, diligently endeavour to prevent further changes to the customs tariff and the consumer tax, or to the granting of any concessions to competitor enterprises, as well as to any social policy. How many times has the army been sent on the orders of these noble diplomats against striking workers in these enterprises in order to make the worker experience for himself the cruelty of the colonial policies of the capitalist class. After all this, it is not difficult to understand exactly what is going on across Bosnia-Herzegovina and other South Slav regions ruled by Austria-Hungary, which are subjected to *direct* exploitation with no defensive walls to protect them!

To avoid a protracted account of the various methods that European capitalism uses to exploit and plunder the Balkan countries, let us just mention the additional fact that this victorious capitalist campaign could not but affect the attitude of the capitalist states to the Balkan Question. The *Edinburgh Review* once wrote:

If we want to assess the significance of English actions on the Nile, of French in the Sahara, or of German on the Tigris, we must look at these actions not with English, German or French, but with *European* eyes. We are *all*, comrades, involved in a *common endeavour* and busy attaining a common goal: the spread of *European culture* there where it is most needed.

32. A town in Germany.

In the Balkans a *common endeavour* is indeed taking place, and this is the action of European capital spreading, not 'European culture', but capitalist colonial exploitation and repression. Despite all the antagonisms that exist between different capitalist states, their capital has found a way to take control of formally independent states and to cross the frontiers of the most varied spheres of influence. It has turned the Balkans into its *joint* sphere of influence and interest, where it feeds on all life's essential juices. The Balkan countries can only console themselves with the *semblance* of independence, and the South Slav nationalities of Austria-Hungary with the *semblance* of being part of the great economic region to which they are connected.

III

Under the influence of European capitalism, the Balkan Question has been given a new *content*, and the kind of solution once suggested only by the most far-sighted politicians has become an inevitability.

It is only under this influence that the Balkan Question has become a *national* question. As a result of economic changes, new classes have emerged, as well as new needs and aspirations, which transcend the limitations of patriarchal life and have the very important consequence that the broad popular masses are becoming economically interested in this question. The Balkan Question has thus been swept off the green table of the diplomats and the dynasties onto the firm ground of national struggles and movements. These struggles and these movements are an undeniable fact. In Croatia, there is the Serbo-Croat coalition for joint struggle against foreign rule;³³ and in Bosnia, a strong national movement for the right of national self-determination, which has forced Austria-Hungary to annex these hitherto merely occupied lands and in this way bind them even more firmly to itself; in the Balkan countries, governments and dynasties increasingly have to take into account the wishes and aspirations of the popular masses in their national policies. The Young Turk Revolution itself was a magnificent manifestation of this historical process, and deserves much greater attention for the deep changes it signalled than for the practical results so far of the Young Turks' militarist *coups d'état*.

Social Democracy, of course, cannot stop short of the question which is bound to increasingly attract the interest of the broad popular masses. As ever, our party is called upon to look external dangers and internal adversity straight in the eye and, as the party of the future, free of all narrow interests and prejudices, to point the way to liberation which is compatible with contemporary economic trends, and corresponds to the interests of general social development, as Kautsky emphasises.³⁴

33. The Croat-Serb coalition (established in 1906) was inspired by the idea of Croat-Serb cooperation to counter the divide-and-rule strategy on which Magyar despotism was based. It became the dominant force in Croatian political life before the First World War.

34. K. Kautsky, *Der Kampf*, 2 Jahrg. 3 Heft (Author's note) [See 'The Tasks of Socialists Among the Balkan Slavs', reproduced above.]

By pointing out the tendencies of capitalism towards brutal and murderous colonial policies, we show the need not just for proletarian *class* politics, but also for an impetus towards a sound *national* policy. It is very important for us to draw attention to the fact that the policies of all the capitalist states represent in the Balkans the unquenchable thirst of capital for exploitation — important not only for the political education of the masses, but for practical success as well. The *race* theory, which for class reasons appeals to representatives of the bourgeois strata, is being supplanted by the *class* theory. But it is only when the illusion of the 'Germanic' threat is destroyed that one can best deal a fatal blow to the 'Slavic' brotherhood with Russia, that most dangerous political contagion in the Balkans. International Social Democracy and its Balkan sections comprise the advance guard against Russian Tsarism, which still represents the greatest danger for the liberation struggles of the proletariat. Our brotherly parties abroad should never forget that, to us in the Balkans, their resolute struggle against the capitalist policy of colonialism and conquest means not only a declaration of international solidarity in fact, but is also an indispensable help in the suppression of Tsarist influence.

It is the merit of Social Democracy that the policy of the so-called 'friendly powers', thanks to repeated historical experiences, has finally been discredited in the eyes of the popular masses.

But the conclusions from all this can in no way serve to excuse today's weaknesses and corruption in the Balkans. The situation has already become quite unbearable. Liberation from a situation created, on the one hand, by dependence on European capitalism, and, on the other, by wasting all the nation's strengths on militarism, can no longer be achieved by going back to patriarchy, but only by raising one's own production to the world economic level. However, can that be done within the framework of the present patchwork of borders, states and rulers in the Balkans? The First Balkan Social Democratic Conference resolutely pointed out that the aspirations of the peoples of south-east Europe:

... can be realised only by combining their economic forces into one whole, abolishing artificially-drawn borders, and enabling them to live together in full reciprocity and in united defence against common danger. For that reason, conference charges Social Democracy with the duty actively to suppress all antagonism among the peoples of south-east Europe and to work to bring them together. Conference also calls on it wholeheartedly to assist all aspirations to full democratic self-government by the people and to national independence, which are the prime conditions if the lives of these nations are to be wrested out of the hands of their foreign and domestic reactionary masters, and the ground prepared for joining forces required for modern economic development as the only guarantee of economic and political independence. Social Democracy must be the first to wish for this, not only because such a solution would best suit the interests of overall social progress, but also because

its own work is always conditioned by the development of the people within which it operates, and because the forces of the class struggle achieve their fullest development in independent countries and nations.

The fulfilment of these requirements will doubtless run into many difficulties. The existing governments in the Balkans and Eastern Europe will do all they can to thwart it. But there will be no peace in the Balkans until these requirements are met. 'They represent the only solution to the 'Eastern Question'.

Christian Rakovsky Towards a Balkan Entente³⁵

I

STUDYING the history of the Balkan states, one is struck by the incoherence and contradictory nature of their foreign policies. Perhaps it might be more accurate to say they have none, so unstable and irrelevant are these to the vital and fundamental interests of the peoples.

If there is any observed continuity in their foreign relations, it is often only the result of an abdication of freedom of action. This, for example, is the case with Romania. By adhering to the policies of the Triple Alliance, and in particular, by having concluded a military convention with Austria, Romania was brought to betray its own interests. Protestingly platonically, it was forced to tolerate the establishment by Austria and Hungary — in breach of the Berlin Treaty — of a monopoly on navigation on the upper Danube by the imposition of prohibitive taxes on shipping going through the Iron Gates.³⁶ That is not all. It was forced to conclude trade agreements unfavourable to its agriculture. Moreover, is there any more depressing proof of the lack of any independent policy than that offered by the Romanian delegates at the Hague Conference³⁷ who voted *against* compulsory arbitration between nations! If anybody needed the introduc-

35. From *Revue de la Paix* (*The Peace Journal*, Organ of the French Society for Arbitration between Nations, 1902-1909), December 1908. Translated from the French by Harry Ratner.

36. Iron Gates is the name given to a 60-mile chain of spectacular gorges running from Serbia to Romania, where the River Danube cuts through the Carpathian Mountains on its way to the Black Sea.

37. Following the intervention of the Russian Tsar, two peace conferences were held in The Hague in 1899 and 1907 to discuss disarmament, the arbitration of international disputes and the rules of land warfare. The resulting International Court of Justice in 1900 and the Hague Convention of 1907 were completely ignored by the Great Powers in the build-up to and during the First World War.

tion of more equity in international relations, it was the small states, and particularly Romania. It must not be forgotten that between three and four million Romanians live under Austrian, Hungarian and Russian domination, and that any weakening of militarism in these countries results in more freedom for the oppressed.

Even though the *national* interest of Romania was to vote for compulsory arbitration, its diplomatic obligations tied it to Germany and Austria and forced it to vote against, because the latter declared themselves opposed to it.

The other Balkan countries give the same impression of powerlessness and disarray. It seems that their only ambition, and their only means of salvation, is to become clients of one or the other Great Power, principally Russia and Austria. That is why we saw the following pathetic spectacles during recent events in the East: Bulgaria in the rôle of a blind instrument of Austrian diplomacy;³⁸ also the Serbs imploring, through noisy demonstrations and special diplomatic missions, the aid of Russia against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina — promised and handed over a long time ago by Russia to Austria;³⁹ the Constantinople crowd cheering in front of the embassies of the Great Powers, celebrations subsequently regretted when it was learnt that the job of the proposed conference would be to *register the faits accomplis*, the Greeks expressing their sentiments of solidarity with the Turks... while announcing the annexation of Crete by Greece; and finally, the Romanians, somewhat awakened from their torpor by the general upheavals around them, starting to protest at the oppressive tutelage exercised by Austria over them and putting their faith in their 'Italian Brothers' to rescue them from this state of affairs.

Moreover, this has been the tactic adopted by all the Balkan peoples. Not only did they not try to lean on each other for support, but on the contrary appealed to strangers for aid in their internal wars. The main traits of their mutual relations have long been mistrust and hate. Their relations are always strained, when they are not in open conflict, as is the case today with Greece against Romania, with diplomatic relations forever being broken off between them, and as was the case at other times between Bulgaria and Romania, and between Bulgaria and Serbia. The cordial assurances that their sovereigns exchange with each other in their speeches from the throne are either sport or empty phrases. In reality, they are jealous of each other and exhaust themselves in sterile and selfish struggles, thereby bringing about their own ruin. Their history is akin to the bloody spectacles of the barbaric Orient, when potentates, in order to punish more cruelly their unfaithful wives, ordered that cats should be put in the sacks in which the wives were to be drowned. When they retrieved this dismal device from the sea bottom it was found that the cats, while drowning, had still managed to tear each other to pieces.

38. Encouraged by Austria, which was about to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prince Ferdinand also took advantage of the Young Turk revolution to declare independence. Austria thus hoped to throttle Serbia, pull Bulgaria into her orbit, and score a victory against Russia.

39. At the Convention of Reschenstadt of 1876, Russia promised Austria part of Bosnia in the event... of a Serbian-Montenegrin victory in their war with Turkey of that year.

II

The consequences of such policies can only be disastrous for the Balkan peoples. On the eve of the launching of a loan or some other circumstance, their governments publish laudatory reports on the progress of their countries, but they never mention the distance they must cover to catch up with the modern states. Even less do they speak of the progress that the Balkan peoples would have made if their initiative had not been paralysed by fear and the uncertainties of the morrow, and if their resources had not been sucked dry by an insatiable militarism.

A long time ago, von der Goltz⁴⁰ called Turkey the most militarist state of the day. With a population of between 12 and 15 million eligible for military service (the Christians are exempt) Turkey's peacetime strength totals 300 000 men. Out of an average budget of 120 million, Bulgaria spends 30 million, that is, a quarter, on its army. This, of course, does not include the special credits — for updating armaments and maintaining the stock of munitions and equipment — which in some years have amounted to 50 million. Romania spends 40 to 45 million per year on its army. In the space of 23 years, from 1883 to 1906, it has spent a total of 970 million francs, not counting the special credits and the cost of fortifications. To estimate how much the latter have cost the country, it is enough to know that the Bucharest fortifications are valued at 112 million in the balance sheet of national assets. Greece exhausts itself building battleships which in times of war lack coal and munitions.

One can judge the disastrous effect of these policies on the internal situation of these peoples by the deplorable state of their finances. We know that international control commissions, representing their foreign creditors, function in Turkey, Greece (which on several occasions declared itself bankrupt) and partly in Serbia and Bulgaria.

They watch over the regular payment of the interest due to them. Romania — a third of whose budget (80 million francs out of 240) is used to service its public debt — has avoided bankruptcy and international control only by imposing exorbitant taxation on the population; by transforming into state monopolies the production and sale of tobacco, matches, cigarette paper, powder for hunting guns, playing cards, salt and finally books and text books for primary school pupils; and by imposing enormous charges on all staples — petrol, sugar, oils, wines, beer, etc.

Is it surprising that these countries lack schools, passable roads, canals and hospitals? Ignorance, misery and mortality ravage the towns and the countryside.

The pitiful state of Turkey is known to all. Everybody has heard of the repugnant aspects of the towns, including the capital of the empire, the most beautiful city in the world by virtue of its geographical position, and the worst maintained. After 30 years of independence, Bulgaria still does not have a rail-

40. Colmar Friedrich von der Goltz (1843-1916), the German officer who as 'Goltz-Pasha' undertook from 1885 the modernisation of the Ottoman army and officer corps in line with German military doctrine.

way line that crosses the Balkan mountain range. Those travelling from north to south who do not want to make the huge detour via Sofia must still cross the Balkans in the ancient way on mule back or in carts painfully pulled along the only national road, laid down at the time of Midhat Pasha.⁴¹ Visiting these countries, you are struck by their absolute isolation from each other. Though Bulgaria and Romania share half their total frontiers, they do not have a single railway line linking them. Furthermore, if the Treaty of Berlin had not required Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey to construct branches of the Paris-Constantinople main line on their territories, they would perhaps have remained to this day without any other means of communication than the Danube and the Black Sea.

The cultural backwardness of all these countries is highlighted by their massive level of illiteracy. From 75 per cent in Bulgaria, it rises to the unbelievable but nevertheless real figure of 86 to 88 per cent in Romania. In that country, out of 2 832 558 children of school age in 1904-05, only 706 508 attended classes, while the rest, 2 126 030, received no instruction.⁴² Need we add that among those who do go to school only an insignificant number complete the five classes of primary school? As far as the material and moral misery of the Romanian people is concerned, suffice it to say that, according to the official statistics, the budget of a Romanian *peasant family* is between 0.45 and 0.5 francs,⁴³ that 48 per cent of the children of low status in the countryside die before the age of seven, and that in the towns 25 per cent of the children are born illegitimate.

It is a well-known fact that all the Balkan countries are at the mercy of droughts and floods, and that a bad harvest means famine and economic and financial crisis. A not insignificant admission was made by the Bulgarian representative in Paris when speaking to a journalist and enumerating all the reasons which made a rapid solution of the Turco-Bulgarian conflict⁴⁴ necessary. He put in the first place the collapse of the sales of Bulgarian wheat due to the congestion of the roads and rumours of war. The poor sales of raisins and olive oil in Greece, and of prunes and livestock in Serbia, have the same significance. How disastrous and ridiculous seems this policy which makes grandiose gestures for the conquest of Constantinople and the re-establishment of the empire of the Byzantine emperors or of King Dušan, only later to admit its complete failure and powerlessness!⁴⁵

41. Ahmet Şefik Mithat Pasha, before winning fame as the author of the constitutional experiment of 1876, had been a progressive and efficient provincial administrator in the Danubian *vilayets* (including modern Bulgaria) in the 1860s.

42. There seems to be a misprint here as these figures do not add up.

43. The text does not tell us whether this is per week/month/year.

44. In October 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire. Wrangling then ensued over the level of 'just compensation' to be paid by Bulgaria to Turkey.

45. The greater nationalisms of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece all looked back to medieval periods of greatness; respectively, the Bulgarian emperors who were stopped at the gates of Constantinople; the Serbian empire of Tsar Dušan Nemanja (1331-1355); and the Byzantine Empire itself

III

Yet what a formidable force for political and economic progress would the Balkan states have represented had they had combined their efforts towards a common goal! A confederation, joined by Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro would, as its first consequence, have given all these peoples the confidence in their own existence that they lack today. At much less cost, such a confederation would have ensured the defence of their territories, and encouraged very vigorous economic and commercial activity between them, thus helping the growth of their productive forces. There is no other region in Europe which has natural conditions so favourable for industrial and agricultural development as the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor.

The rich oil resources of the Carpathians,⁴⁶ the numerous coal mines in Serbia and Asia Minor, the minerals and marble quarries of the Rhodope,⁴⁷ the Pindus⁴⁸ and the Laurium⁴⁹ regions; everything is present to make possible the birth and growth of a national industrial economy.

The astonishing fertility of the soil of the Danubian plains, of Thrace, of Macedonia 'which surpass in goodness the plains of Sicily', and of Thessaly, make this area a veritable granary for Europe. In addition to cereals, these countries lend themselves to the culture of all industrial plants; rape and flax in Romania, roses in South Bulgaria and Asia Minor, rice, cotton and tobacco in South Bulgaria and Macedonia, and vines and olive trees in Greece. The lush pastures at the foot of the mountains make possible the breeding of innumerable flocks and herds of animals, large and small. The Danube, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean⁵⁰ which bathe all these countries permit easy and permanent communications with the three great continents.

In addition, the Balkan Peninsula, with Asia Minor and the Arabian peninsula, form a knot, as it were, tying together Europe, Asia and Africa. How different would all these countries, once the cradle of several civilisations and now desolate and impoverished, look if a regime of peace and liberty allowed their inhabitants to apply their skills to running their internal political and economic affairs. And all this depends purely on the Balkan peoples, on their understanding their interests and the degree of their political wisdom.

In such a commonwealth as the Balkan confederation, there would be room and liberty for all... But in that case we must ask ourselves: what could have prevented until now the realisation of such an idea?

It would be childish to explain this attitude of the Balkan peoples as a simple misunderstanding which only had to be cleared up for everything to fall into

46. A mountain range that curves in a great arc from the region around Vienna, and then horizontally across Czechoslovakia, bending across the entire north-south axis of Romania to end in eastern Serbia.

47. A mountain range running south-east from the region of Sofia to the Aegean.

48. A mountain range running the length of the Greek mainland from the southern Albanian border to the Aegean, and emerging again on the island of Crete.

49. A region of Attica, south of Athens, bordering the Aegean.

50. Rakovsky sees the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire (including the Near East) as a geopolitical whole.

place. The life of humankind is determined by inescapable forces that destroy or consolidate states and peoples without being guided by our humanitarian considerations. But it is by studying the play of these forces on the Balkan peninsula that we believe ourselves justified in affirming the early possibility of a Balkan confederation. Some time ago, such optimism was not justified. The conditions then were not favourable for the realisation of such an idea; one could treat it as a fantasy. Today, that is no longer the case. We do not say that it will be realised tomorrow, but that the time has arrived when it ceases to be an ideological wish and becomes a slogan of political groups and parties. This constitutes a considerable step forward. This will become clear after the analysis we shall make of the historical causes which have up till now kept this idea of a Balkan confederation in abeyance.

IV

The first and main source of struggle in the Balkans was the desire of the oppressed peoples to regain their freedom and independence. To do this, they had to fight not only the domination of the Sultans, but also that of the Greek clergy.

An important event, ignorance of which makes incomprehensible the bloody conflicts between Bulgarian, Greek and other bands in Macedonia, took place after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks. We refer to the extension, nominal until then, of the power of the Greek Patriarchate over all the Orthodox lands of the East. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, we were faced by a greedy and corrupt Byzantine oligarchy whose seat was at Phanar, in Constantinople, by the side of the Patriarch. Consisting of old Byzantine families and upstarts brought to prominence by services rendered to the Turkish pashas, this greedy and corrupt oligarchy had become the master of all Christianity in the Balkan peninsula. It had extended its power as far as Bukovina,⁵¹ Transylvania and southern Russia. Everything, churches and monasteries, was in its hands. The offices of priest in the smallest village as of bishop were put up for auction and sold to the highest bidder. A swarm of Greek monks, whose principal nursery was Mount Athos,⁵² invaded the towns and villages, submitting the unhappy populations to a strict regime. The religious services were in Greek; in the schools, insofar as there were any, instruction was in Greek. Serb, Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian names disappeared from the vocabulary: Turkey recognised only one people, the 'roummileti' (the Roman people),⁵³ and only one power to represent them; the Patriarch and the oligarchy of Phanar.

One understands why the national renaissance of the Balkan peoples showed itself first in a bitter struggle against the Phanariot clergy. Chased out of south-

51. From 1775 to 1918, this former Ottoman province became the easternmost crown land of the Austrian Empire and one of the most ethnically mixed. It is now divided between Romania and Ukraine.

52. Mount Athos lies at the south-easternmost tip of the Thessalonika Peninsula overlooking the Aegean.

53. The non-Ottoman empire was organised into religious communities (*millet* or 'nations'). The Orthodox were known as *Roumli* (Romans) because Orthodoxy had been the state religion of the Byzantine Roman Empire.

ern Russia, Transylvania and Bukovina, it was later chased out of Serbia and Romania, which in 1864 confiscated the immense estates in mortmain which the Greek monasteries had managed to acquire. Finally, in 1871, the Turkish government was forced to recognise the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church. As a result, the Greek clergy lost its hold over the great majority of Bulgarians. But it maintained it in Macedonia where struggles between Exarchists and Patriarchists continued, that is, between Bulgarians belonging to the Bulgarian church — which the Patriarch had solemnly declared schismatic — and the Patriarchists, Bulgarians recognising the authority of the Patriarch and attending churches and schools in which the services and instruction were in Greek.

It is interesting to note the attitude of Greece itself to the Patriarch. There was a time when the kingdom of the Hellenes had to conduct a fierce struggle against Phanar, a vile instrument in the hands of the Turkish government, which, pursuing only its own interests, placed obstacles in the way of the building and developing a free Greece. Having made ancient Greek — inaccessible to the masses — a tool for its domination, Phanar persecuted the Greek patriots who wanted to use modern Greek as the written language — disdainfully described by the Phanariots as 'the language of the grocers of Zagora' (a town in Thessaly).

This antagonism did not last long. In its quest to expand to the north, the newly-constituted kingdom, found in the Patriarchate an ally and a pioneer of panhellenism.

Side by side with the Greek propaganda in Macedonia, there also appeared Serb propaganda. Having lost the hope of expanding in the direction of Bosnia after the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia was reduced to seeking an outlet to the sea across Macedonia and Old Serbia.⁵⁴ Hence the need to prove that Macedonia is Serbian.

The struggle of the Bulgarians gradually took on the same nationalist character. It had long ceased to have as its objective the true interests of the Bulgarian population of Macedonia, and had transformed itself into an open struggle to annex this province to Bulgaria.

The prospect of an imminent carve-up of Turkey brought about the mentality of electoral agents among the leaders of all these peoples, who, on the eve of a decisive contest, try to win the maximum of votes for their candidate. So Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians or Serbs had only one aim: to prove that the majority of the population was with them so that Macedonia would be given them when the carve-up took place. As this carve-up was thought imminent, there was no time to be lost. It was essential to force every Macedonian to declare himself a Bulgarian or a Greek by any means: by persuasion, money or the dagger. And finally, statistics were presented that were pure fantasy in order to convince the outside world.

54. Today the area covering Novi Pazar in southern Serbia, Kosovo and the north-west of the Republic of Macedonia. Its name derived from the fact that it was formerly part of the medieval Serbian Empire.

V

It can be seen how much the change of regime in Turkey could transform the situation. It will bring everyone to his senses. The race to annex Macedonia, which was nothing but a race towards the abyss, will lose much of its interest, and the different nations will come to a saner appreciation of reality.

It is right to say that such a transformation will not happen in one day. Various hatreds, jealousies and resentments will continue for some time to exert a paralysing influence on the peoples, but the conflicts between them will lose much of their sharpness, as have the struggles between the different religions with the declaration of freedom of worship. In countries where religious equality is a reality, the parties have long ago ceased to identify themselves with religious loyalties, and now take heed only of economic and political interests. In the same way, the new Turkey will succeed, through complete equality between the nations, in fusing them into one common nation, in the bosom of which new struggles will arise — the kind that exist within homogeneous nations.

A big step towards this would have been the reform of education. In the old Turkey, this was left to the religious communities. Each nationality saw to its primary, secondary and higher schools through voluntary contributions and through subsidies provided secretly or openly by the Balkan states. The same applied to the financing of religion. There is no need to emphasise how much this state of affairs encouraged the separatist politics of the national blocs.

We cannot now go into the details of the reform required, but its objective should be to create national schools, that is, schools maintained by the state or the municipalities, while ensuring that instruction is given in the language of each nationality.

So long as the Turkish government is not in a position to realise such a reform, all attempts to destroy the existing national blocs will be useless violence. This is a tactic the Young Turks must avoid at all cost. It must be admitted that, unfortunately, they are beginning to allow themselves to be drawn down this slope common to all weak governments. In the parliamentary elections, in Macedonia as well as in Constantinople, it seems they have employed not very commendable methods — against the Greeks here, against the Bulgarians there — in order to create artificial majorities.

Moreover, we are under no illusion: the new regime in Turkey would soon be in danger if its existence depended only on the goodwill of this or that political grouping, especially Turkish ones naturally drawn to an excessive centralism and authoritarianism. This in no way permits Christian democracy to play the game of Young Turk nationalism by itself continuing the old errors.

This is how the internal evolution of Turkey, by removing one of the causes — the main one — of the quarrels between the Balkan states — over the Ottoman legacy — clears the way for their confederation. The latter appears as an inevitable consequence of historical progress. By revealing to them their new destiny, the propaganda in favour of this idea will accustom the nationalists in Turkey and the Turkish nation itself to conducting themselves more confidently and with greater tolerance in their mutual relations.

VI

The intervention of the interested Great Powers, inflaming the Balkan peoples against each other by dangling in front of their eyes the possibility of territorial expansion, either at the expense of Turkey or of each other, has complicated and exacerbated the national struggles in the East.

In this respect, it is Russia which has played the most harmful rôle. It is true, as we remarked in our last article,⁵⁵ that Austria is trying to usurp this rôle of trouble-maker. But if it has succeeded, it is partly thanks to Russian support.

In order to continue its irresistible push towards the south — the Mediterranean — Russia would have to conquer Turkey. I won't speak here of the innumerable projects to divide up the Ottoman Empire that Russia has wanted to agree, or has agreed, with Austria, France or England. These projects could not come to fruition because of the impossibility of sharing out Constantinople and its straits — if there had been two Constantinoples, said Wellington, Turkey would have disappeared long ago. Also, as it was unable to undertake a direct war of conquest, Russia had to limit itself to the only possible policy, that of constant intervention in Turkey aimed at the protection of the Christians. The hoped-for result would be the weakening and disintegration of Turkey.

In the light of this policy it was essential, firstly, to prevent Turkey from consolidating itself by internal reform; this would take away Russia's pretext for intervention, and secondly, to prevent the Balkan states — whose creation was to be but a stage towards their final conquest by Russia — from strengthening themselves by their union. This would take away from Russia the right to protect them.

Today, after the recent publication by his son of Midhat Pasha's correspondence, we know of the intrigues of General Ignatiev,⁵⁶ the then Russian ambassador in Constantinople, to sabotage the constitutional reform of 1876. He appointed himself the ally and most enthusiastic adviser of the Old Turks. He did not conceal this. 'Russia considers the granting of a parliament and a constitution to Turkey as an insult and act of defiance towards herself. The existence of a Turkish constitution is in itself a sufficient cause for us to declare war. We shall never consent to remain the only European power without constitutional government', he told the English ambassador, Sir Layard,⁵⁷ who hastened to inform his government in a letter dated 30 May 1876.

Twenty years later, when others besides Russia wanted to protest against the massacres of Christians in Turkey — the massacres of the Armenians in Asia Minor — and favoured reforms, Prince Lobanov⁵⁸ replied that the massacres

55. C. Rakovsky, 'La Question d'Orient et les Puissances' ('The Eastern Question and the Powers'), *Revue de la Paix*, November 1908 [Author's note].

56. Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev (1832-1908) was a pan-Slavist diplomat and statesman who, as Russian ambassador to Constantinople (1864-77), promoted pan-Slav revolt during the Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 to advance Russian goals at the expense of Turkey and Austria-Hungary.

57. Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) was an archaeologist, diplomat and politician.

58. Prince Aleksei Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky (1824-1896) was a Russian diplomat and statesman, and foreign minister during 1895-96.

were regrettable 'incidents', and that as for serious reforms, particularly autonomy for Armenia, Russia wanted to hear none of them. He told Sir Frank Lascelles,⁵⁹ the English ambassador in St Petersburg: 'We will not agree to the creation of a second Bulgaria on the Russo-Turkish frontier in Asia Minor.' Finally, a year later, when new massacres — probably the most horrible history has known, those of Constantinople in 1896 — unpelled England to propose an armed intervention against Turkey, the Russian minister Shishvin replied that one could not hold the Sultan responsible for the massacres and that 'all methods of coercion against him were repugnant to his Majesty the Tsar'.

And if today Russia shows itself favourable to the new regime, it is doing so reluctantly, seeing in it, for the moment, the only means of conserving the territorial *status quo* in the East, until such time as it can profitably change it. One suspects that Russian diplomacy has always been resolutely opposed to a Balkan confederation. Its representatives have said so publicly in certain moments of frankness. Mr Tatishchev⁶⁰ wrote in his book *De Passé de la Diplomatie Russe*: 'The formation of a federation of the three states, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, would have definitely blocked our road to the Straits and would have been much more dangerous to us. It would have served as a powerful weapon in the hands of our adversaries.'

In fact, the whole of Russian policy has been, as it were, haunted by this fear. In order to prevent any understanding between the peoples, it sowed dissension. During the period when its influence in Bulgaria was all-powerful, it tried to push Bulgaria into war on two occasions; against Serbia in 1883 and against Romania in 1885. On both occasions, it was over a miserable question of frontier demarcation (the frontier at Bregovo with Serbia and at Arab-Tabia with Romania). Domestic events and — in the conflict with Romania — the revolution in Eastern Rumelia⁶¹ — prevented these quarrels from taking a bloody turn. However, a few months later, the rôles had been reversed; Bulgaria had broken away from Russia, and Serbia had moved closer to Bulgaria. And it was Serbia that Russia, in collusion with Austria, pushed into war against Bulgaria. In our recent article, we had already alluded to the responsibility of these two powers in the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885.

Here is the proof. At the Conference of Constantinople which convened after the revolution in Rumelia, the representatives of the Great Powers — their ambassadors in the Turkish capital — drew up a declaration of principles. On the demand of Austria, supported by Russia, any statement which could be interpreted as a criticism of Serbia for its military preparations was omitted. The following sentence, among others, was suppressed: 'It is the unanimous wish of the Great Powers that peace be maintained in *the whole* of the Balkan Peninsula.'

59. Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles (1841-1920).

60. Sergei Spiridonovich Tatishchev (1846-1906) was a Russian historian and diplomat. See *Le passé diplomatique russe: Histoire*, St Petersburg, 1890.

61. The Treaty of Berlin, together with an autonomous Bulgarian state, created from the Ottoman Empire the semi-autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia (today roughly the southern half of Bulgaria). A revolution in the province in 1885 led to its unification with Bulgaria.

Another fact: on the eve of the war, the French government proposed to the powers an action which could have prevented hostilities: a collective approach to Belgrade to inform the Serbian government that in the event of an attack by Serbia: 'Europe would not prevent the Sultan from going to the aid of his vassal, the Prince of Bulgaria.' Replying to this proposal, Mr Giers,⁶² the Russian Foreign Minister, told the French ambassador to St Petersburg: 'Above all Europe must advise Prince Alexander⁶³ to return to Sofia, after which King Milan,⁶⁴ having no longer cause for anger, will calm down.'

Russia's attitude during the 'Turkish-Greek war of 1897 and the struggle between the nationalities in Macedonia was just as typical. An incident reported by Mr Naumann, the Athens correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*,⁶⁵ and taken up by all the press was the intervention of Mr Nelidov,⁶⁶ the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, aimed at sabotaging the direct negotiations that had begun between Greece and Turkey. Russian diplomacy was pushing openly for war, and all the official press, with *Novoe Vremya*⁶⁷ at its head, was jubilant at the idea that 'the Athenian demagogy' would suffer the punishment it deserved. This paper wrote in its issue of 29 March 1897: 'The defeat of revolution and anarchy can only reinforce monarchy and order.'

Furthermore, those familiar with Macedonian affairs are aware of the active rôle played by the Russian consuls in the local conflicts. At first sympathetic to the Bulgarians, they later openly sided with the Serbs. Mr Yastrebov, the Russian consul in Salonika, was particularly noted for his proselytising.

VII

'Russia uses the subject peoples as petty cash which it throws as tips to its allies.' These words by a Serb historian are plainly justified when one recalls the history of the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria.

We have already noted that these two provinces were promised by Russia to Austria in 1876, at the forthcoming dismemberment of Turkey, and that this fact which remained long secret, was exposed for the first time by Bismarck's organ, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1887 (the 27 April issue). A few days later, the *Moskovskaja Wsedomosk*⁶⁸ (of 29 April-11 May) published an article by Mr Tatistev who had been present at the conclusion of this secret agreement as sec-

62. Nikolai Karlovich Giers (1820-1895) was the Russian foreign minister during the reign of Alexander III (1881-94).

63. Alexander of Battenberg (1857-1893) was Prince of Bulgaria (1879-86). His opposition to Russian domination led to his kidnapping by pro-Russian Bulgarians and eventually his abdication.

64. Milan Obrenović was King of Serbia during 1868-89.

65. *The Daily Chronicle* was published in London during 1872-1930.

66. Alexander Ivanovich Nelidov (1835-1912) was the Russian ambassador to Bulgaria at the time of the Russian-inspired kidnapping of Prince Alexander.

67. *New Times* (St Petersburg, 1868-1917) was a right-wing daily with the largest circulation in Russia.

68. *The Moscow Gazette*, established 1756, was controlled during 1863-87 by the Russian pan-Slavist Mikhail Katkov (1818-1887).

retary at the Russian embassy in Vienna. He confirmed the facts, making the following admission:

I will be betraying neither my oath nor diplomatic discretion by saying with confidence that if this convention had been completely carried out, the Balkan peninsula would not today be the sorry spectacle of interminable disagreements, bloody conflicts and submission to foreign influences: on the contrary, the influence of Russia in the bosom of its populations would have been permanently established *on large and solid foundations*.

The reader will understand that this is an allusion to the carve-up, either of a part, or of the whole of Turkey between Russia and Austria.

Polemicalising against Messrs Martens and Komarowski, who expressed the wish that Bosnia and Herzegovina be given to Serbia and Montenegro, another Russian writer, Mr Skalkovsky,⁶⁹ remarked: 'These wise men pretend to ignore that, independently of the Treaty of Berlin, Russia had pledged itself not only never to demand of Austria-Hungary the return of the occupied provinces, but, in addition, not to put obstacles in the way of the occupation of old Serbia.'

If we have made this long digression into the diplomatic history of the East, it is to demonstrate that today the formation of a Balkan confederation will not meet any more adversaries as powerful and implacable as those in the past. Russia, weakened after its defeat in the Far East⁷⁰ and having entered into a period of soul-searching, as after the Crimean War, is incapable, at least for some time, of carrying on an aggressive policy in the Balkans. Maybe it might even resign itself to seeing a new power blossom around the Black Sea in order to curb the progress of Austria. At the same time, despite the retreat of the revolutionary movement, Russian public opinion, which is sympathetic to the Balkan peoples, is not as inactive as before.

As for the designs of Austria, they can easily be paralysed by the united action of the Balkan peoples. They will find powerful defenders within the Habsburg Empire itself, as much among the nationalities as amongst the social democratic forces.

VIII

Over a century ago when Mr Vanderk senior, speaking of merchants, declares in *Philosophie sans le Savoir* (*Philosopher Without Knowing It*),⁷¹ 'We are, on the surface of the earth, so many silk threads which link the nations together and bring them back to peace through the necessity of trade', he pointed out the main means for international rapprochement in our epoch. Having remained economically backward, the Balkan countries, as producers of cereals and raw materials, have many links with the great industrial countries, but few between themselves. This

69. Konstantin Apolonovich Skalkovsky (1843-1906) was an engineer, publicist and historian.

70. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 was fought to carve out spheres of influence in the Far East, mainly at the expense of China. Russia's defeat led directly to the First Russian Revolution of 1905.

71. *Le Philosophe sans le savoir* (1766) was a comedy by Michel Jean Sedaine (1719-1797).

has without doubt greatly retarded their *entente*. An exception is the trade between Turkey and Bulgaria. The latter sells not only its agricultural produce and its livestock, but also some of its industrial products in the Turkish and, particularly, the Constantinople markets. And we think that it is to this, namely, to the fear of a commercial crisis that would follow a war, that we owe the peaceful resolution of the Turkish-Bulgarian conflict. And it is the strong and permanent development of trading relationships between all the Balkan states which will provide the most efficacious means for their political and cultural rapprochement.

We believe we have enumerated the main factors that have held back a Balkan *entente*. They were the need to create for themselves a national identity, now achieved; the chauvinism which was grafted on to these legitimate struggles, a chauvinism already declining; and the intrigues of the Great Powers which unexpected events have rendered inoffensive. Beside these main factors, the ambitions of the heads of state to present themselves in the rôle of a Louis XIV, the incapability of the politicians and their parties, whose activity is insufficient without the direct control of the people, are relatively unimportant. Kings and governments will be forced to bend before the needs of their time and the will of their nations. This is all the more so since the new external conditions will no longer allow such latitude for obscure conspiracies in which, often under the pretext of defending the independence of their country, the holders of power defended their dynastic or party interests.

Needless to say, a Balkan confederation can only be based on a policy of defence. Its main aim is the defence of the territorial integrity and political independence of the peoples that make it up. During the period when the Hamidian absolutism reigned in Turkey, it would have had to be excluded from such a political constellation. To have admitted it would have been to give its Sultan and his camarilla power and impunity. And even today for Turkey to rise to the level of its great rôle, a democratic revision of its Constitution of 1876 is called for. It is a constitution which, with its restricted franchise and Senate — half of which is appointed by the Sultan — takes little account of the popular will.

We do not want to close this essay without a few words about the attempts made so far to bring about a Balkan *entente*. Apart from the efforts of the socialists who in all the countries have been its most faithful and constant supporters, we must note some private and governmental initiatives. Among the latter, we first note the approaches of Trikoupis,⁷² a former Greek minister, who, during a voyage to Bulgaria in 1887, proposed to Stambolov⁷³ that they work together towards the realisation of a Balkan confederation. But we are told that the Bulgarian dictator reported this conversation to the Turkish government, in ex-

72. Harilaos Trikoupis (1832-1897) was a Greek statesman and reformer who dominated Greek political life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He was a proponent of various nationalist schemes for a 'Balkan union' in the course of his political career, including one in 1891 for an anti-Turkish Balkan union.

73. Stefan Stambolov (1854-1895) was the Regent and Prime Minister of Bulgaria (1886-94) who freed the country from Russian 'protection'.

change for which he obtained the appointment of two Bulgarian bishops in Macedonia. In 1897, there was an attempt for an *entente* between Bulgaria and Serbia. During a visit to Sofia, King Alexander discussed with Prince Ferdinand the partition of Macedonia, taking as a demarcation line the river Vardar.⁷⁴ Fortunately, this project had no future. But we must regret the failure of a project for a Serb-Bulgarian customs union in 1906. We know that Austria opposed it.

After the departure of Prince Battenberg, the Bulgarians offered the King of Romania the Bulgarian crown. He refused it. In any case, it is unlikely that Russia, at that time, would have consented to the creation of a Romano-Bulgarian kingdom.

Up till now, there have been no serious private initiatives in this direction. A committee of Turco-Bulgarian *entente* presided over by the former minister, Mr Nachovich,⁷⁵ was formed in Sofia only after the Turkish revolution. We know that during the crisis this committee worked with the delegates of the Young Turks, who had arrived in Sofia, with the aim of calming the conflict.

Let us hope that these initiatives will become frequent, and that in all the Balkan countries committees will be formed to work for this so necessary and so useful Balkan *entente*.

Dimităr Blagoev Political Prospects⁷⁶

OUR readers know that from the very beginning of the coup in Turkey, our bourgeoisie has begun to talk of concluding an alliance with constitutional Turkey. On the other hand, its 'left' and 'extreme left' wings talk about a *Balkan confederation*.⁷⁷ Of course, they do not say what they mean by this. As far as one can deduce from what they write about this question, they see a *Balkan confederation* as a political alliance between the Balkan peoples, including Turkey. In this case, the difference between the bourgeoisie and its 'left' and 'extreme left' wings is that the former talk about a political alliance above all with Turkey, while the latter talk about a political alliance with Turkey and all or most of the Balkan statelets.

74. The Vardar river bisects the present Republic of Macedonia, then passes into Greece and eventually flows into the Gulf of Salonika.

75. Grigor Nachovich (1845-1920) was a leading Bulgarian conservative politician, cabinet minister and diplomat.

76. From *Novo Vremy*, June 1909. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković.

77. The petit-bourgeois republican Radical Democratic Party and the peasant-populist Agrarian National Union of Alexandăr Stamboliski (Prime Minister of Bulgaria, 1919-23) both supported the idea of a Balkan confederation. Blagoev is also referring to the Broad socialists, whom he considered to be bourgeois politicians.

Therefore the political prospects for the Balkan Peninsula after the coup in Turkey are an alliance with Turkey or a *Balkan confederation*. But are these possible in practice?

Without doubt, under a given coincidence of circumstances, both an alliance of Bulgaria and Turkey, and a general alliance between the Balkan statelets, especially Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania with Turkey, are possible. However, such political alliances do not lead to the establishment of a lasting power on the Balkan Peninsula that would protect the national autonomy of the Balkan peoples and give them the conditions in which to develop. An alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey or a political alliance of the Balkan statelets with Turkey, that is, a Balkan confederation, has a temporary character, like every political alliance. In addition to this, the ambition of each member of the alliance to use it for its own national aims is basic to such an alliance. And this circumstance presents a constant danger of collapse for such alliances, and this danger is the closer at hand since they are always vulnerable to the intrigues of the bigger states. But most importantly, an alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey, or a Balkan confederation, would change literally nothing in the political and social condition of the nations that concluded such an alliance. The question of their national unification would remain unresolved. On the other hand, each of the Balkan statelets would remain within the same borders to exhaust its productive forces without having the possibility of fully developing them. Under these conditions, an alliance of Turkey with Bulgaria, or a Balkan confederation, would be to no purpose, especially to the small statelets. An alliance with Turkey or a Balkan confederation would be useful at present only for Turkey, and through her Britain, and to a certain degree Russia. The last is and has been for a long time incapable of conducting any military actions on the Balkan Peninsula. This explains the fact that Britain and Russia, especially the latter, are encouraging on the one hand the idea of an alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey (which is mainly the British position), and on the other the idea of a Balkan confederation, especially between the Balkan statelets (which is mainly the Russian position). But this alliance would mainly serve to strengthen Turkey, which is not at all in the interests of the Balkan peoples. The strengthening of Turkey on the backs of the Balkan peoples would mean creating a new danger for them. Liberal Turkey, once it has consolidated itself, would surely seek to restore its old influence on the Balkan Peninsula. If it really undergoes a resurgence, the objective logic of its development would itself drive Turkey towards an imperialist policy. And it has nowhere else to find an outlet for such a policy other than the Balkan Peninsula. And it is Bulgaria that will experience the first blows of such a policy on the part of a resurgent Turkey. This will compel Bulgaria to expand her armed forces, which will hinder her social development. Bulgaria, therefore, has absolutely no interest in having a resurgent Turkey on her border, just as the latter has absolutely no interest in having a powerful Bulgaria as a neighbour.

However, the political prospects for the Balkan Peninsula appear to be quite different if a *Balkan federation*, a *Balkan federal state*, were to be created. This is also

an alliance of the Balkan peoples, but a quite different alliance from a *Balkan confederation*.

The *confederation* is an alliance where the states that form it maintain their autonomy in all respects. The common factor that links the states entering into it is the common obligation to defend each other from any violation of their independence and of each state's integrity. There are no other common obligations in a confederation. The *federation*, by contrast, is a union where the states that form it maintain their independence only in internal self-government. In all other respects, each of the states that enters into the federation abides by a common constitution, and is governed by a single parliament, a common foreign policy, military organisation and financial policy.

As we can see, the *federation* is fundamentally different from the *confederation*. The latter is not a state but a purely political alliance of several states. By contrast, the *federation* is a *state* or an alliance of separate states, but one that has does not have purely political goals as its basis, but rather common economic, social and political goals. But from this difference between the federation and the confederation, it becomes clear that the *Balkan confederation*, as a purely political alliance, represents something temporary, short-lived and expedient. The *Balkan federation*, by contrast, is a union that establishes a single Balkan state that can not only protect the independent existence of the Balkan peoples, but also establish the necessary conditions for their social development.

But is the *Balkan federation* possible? What are its prospects?

Today, the question of establishing a *Balkan customs union* has been taken up in the bourgeois press, both in Bulgaria and the other Balkan states, such as Serbia and Romania. This question is not new. Three years ago, there was even an attempt to create a *customs union* between Bulgaria and Serbia. A law paving the way for such a union between these two states was adopted with acclamation by the Thirteenth National Assembly, dominated by the Stambolovists.⁷⁸ However, Austria immediately scuppered this attempt. Serbia, which was meant to vote simultaneously for such a law enabling a customs union with Bulgaria, desisted from doing so under pressure from Austria.⁷⁹ Today, however, the question of a Balkan customs union is being raised anew, with the prospect of a more serious attitude to it on the part of the neighbouring Balkan states.

The most interesting thing is that today Russia is encouraging a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia. This is a bad sign. Russia's encouragement can only signify a desire to frustrate a *Balkan federal customs union*. Russia knows very

78. *Stambolovists* were the followers of the National Liberal Party, founded by Stefan Stambolov (Prime Minister, 1886-94). They formed a cabinet in 1903 and secured a majority in the Thirteenth National Assembly (1903-08) on the basis of elections conducted under police terror. They promoted the industrialisation of country by, for example, raising tariffs on imports, and signed a customs union (enabling free trade) with Serbia on 3 July 1905.

79. In early 1906, incensed by the temerity of its vassal in concluding a separate customs agreement, Vienna demanded that Serbia back down. Serbia's refusal led Austria to impose a customs blockade on Serbian livestock (its major export), triggering the 'Pig War'. In the end, Austria failed to ruin the Serbian economy, marking the end of Serbia's economic dependency on it.

well that a customs union limited to Bulgaria and Serbia cannot be lasting, but mainly that it cannot lead to a Balkan federal customs union. It knows that without Turkey no Balkan customs union is possible, and that a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia will likewise today be foiled by Austria with the secret assistance of Russian diplomacy, just as it was three years ago. Russia's encouragement is wholly perfidious, just as it was during Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina when Russia encouraged Serbia against Austria only in the end to leave it completely crushed by Austrian pressure. Through such perfidious encouragement, Russia aims to extract compensation for itself from Austria and Germany, whether on the Balkan Peninsula or elsewhere, for example in Persia.⁸⁰ Hence Russia's encouragement of a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia is indeed a very bad sign. This is directed against the aspiration for a *Balkan customs union*, which likewise is neither in the interests of Russia or Austria since such a union only becomes possible when Turkey joins.

The *Balkan federal customs union* is indeed the only condition under which the *Balkan federation* can be realised in practice. To speak of the necessity and benefits of a Balkan federation without pointing out the practical conditions under which it can be realised is to speak hypothetically and to present the Balkan federation as an abstract idea, or a utopia. A precondition for the *Balkan federation* is the *Balkan federal customs union*, the establishment of which would very soon and of necessity lead to a *Balkan federation*. It is self-evident that a *Balkan federal customs union* would not play the rôle of a precondition for a Balkan federation if it were established on a *confederal* basis, but only if it were set up on a *federal* basis. A *confederal customs union* would wind up as unsuccessful as a *Balkan confederation*. On the other hand, a *Balkan customs union* is totally impossible without Turkey. For example, without it a customs union between Bulgaria and Serbia would have no force of attraction and would never come to fruition. If this is true of the period before the July coup in Turkey, then it is a thousand times truer today. Consequently, the main question is that of winning Turkey to a Balkan customs union, which is why the question of the *Balkan federation* reduces itself to the question of creating a *Balkan customs union*.

Turkey is still today one of the main barriers to the realisation of the Balkan customs union. Today it is inspired only by Greater Ottoman ideals. Right now, it imagines itself as a great empire that can play a rôle, can exist and develop independently and become an even greater power. That is why Turkey today is as far from any thought of a Balkan customs union as it was during the Hamidian regime. It is true that today Turkey is preoccupied with the consolidation of the new regime, and perhaps will continue to be for a long time, and this does not leave it time for other thoughts. At first glance, this may explain the fact that Turkey is far from any thought of a Balkan customs union. However, in reality,

80 Following the Young Turk revolution, the foreign ministers of Russia and Austria-Hungary came to a vague future agreement whereby Austria would annex Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchange for supporting Russian designs on the Black Sea Straits. The fact that Austria immediately implemented the annexation without fulfilling its side of the bargain was a considerable defeat for Russian diplomacy.

it is not only far from such thoughts, but it is also doing everything it can to render such thoughts impossible. And this shows that the cause does not lie in the weakness of the new regime, but elsewhere. When it becomes strong again — if indeed it can really achieve this — it will be even less in favour of a customs union. It will consider itself even more a Great Power, one that will seek to play a rôle in the European concert, giving the latter the possibility of engaging in intrigues against the creation of a Balkan customs union.

The interests of the dynasties that rule over the Balkan peoples present the other main barrier to the creation of such a union. And in addition to the fact that the Balkan peoples differ from one another in terms of nationality, faith, historical traditions and social structure, the fact of their economic backwardness means that their bourgeoisies are both weak as ruling classes and — existing in small statelets — find themselves under the influence of the dynasties, and in close alliance with them. For this reason, each one of these dynasties wants to play the rôle of the Prussian kings in Germany, or at least the rôle of Piedmont in Italy on the Balkan Peninsula. The Bulgarian bourgeoisie fully shares these dynastic aspirations. Obviously this situation on the Balkan Peninsula can in no way promote the creation of a Balkan customs union.

Before the July coup in Turkey, the capitalist powers with interests in the Balkan Peninsula — above all Britain and France — saw Bulgaria as the Prussia of the Balkans. This rôle greatly appealed to both the ruling dynasty and the bourgeois patriots. After the proclamation of Bulgaria as an independent empire and Prince Ferdinand as the Emperor of the Bulgarians, this idea certainly implanted itself even more strongly. But can Bulgaria really play the rôle of a Prussia in the Balkans? In other words, could Bulgaria really be the state that takes the initiative in creating a Balkan federal customs union to become the centre around which all the other Balkan states unite?

At present, Bulgaria cannot play this rôle, even though the ruling dynasty and patriotic bourgeoisie fancies that it can. Bulgaria could yet play this rôle if it became highly industrialised, and on this basis be capable of imposing itself. But for this, it would need a revolutionary bourgeois class to introduce a new principle, a new socio-political idea among the Balkan peoples. It will not be achieved by a bourgeois class that finds itself a prisoner of the ruling dynasty, and is bewitched by the miserable, chauvinist ideals of conquest that go by the name of 'great national ideals' for which it strives to sacrifice everything. Today, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, like that of the other Balkan states, is not the bearer of any new socio-political principles. It does not appear as a revolutionary class in this respect. It is drunk on wretched nationalist aspirations, and thus with monarchism, crude egoism and treachery. That is why today Bulgaria cannot play any kind of revolutionary rôle in the Balkans. The same is true of the bourgeoisies of the other Balkan states. And in that case neither Bulgaria nor any of the other Balkan states can become the centre around which the Balkan states will unite in a federal state through a Balkan federal customs union. Therefore the political outlook for these statelets is today not very promising.

The only hope that the Balkan peoples will avoid the danger of rotting in

their own weakness and of losing their independence, and likewise the only hope that they will federate in one state, lies in capitalist development. Only the latter can force the Balkan states one way or another to federate. Capitalism is imposing itself in Turkey and Bulgaria, and upon the other Balkan peoples. However, such development will increasingly push them into a corner and force them to seek a way out. In this way, the idea of the *Balkan federation* by means of the preliminary creation of a *Balkan federal customs union* will increasingly mature, together with the development of capitalism. And it is obvious that whichever Balkan state develops capitalism first and most intensively will be the first to recognise the need for a revolutionary initiative for the establishment of a Balkan federal customs union. But without capitalist development on the Balkan Peninsula, the realisation of the Balkan federation is totally impossible.

It should be clear from the above that the Balkan federation can only be brought about by the revolutionary initiative of one social class. You would expect that capitalist development would hand this initiative over to the bourgeoisie. However, given what has been argued above, we cannot expect a decisive revolutionary initiative on its part. Its revolutionary initiative will never reach decisive proportions. But capitalist development, together with the bourgeoisie, raises up another class — *the proletariat*. This class becomes a revolutionary class in the full sense of the word when it adopts its own philosophy — socialism. The more the proletariat becomes class conscious, the more it acts as a revolutionary class. It is obvious that the idea of a Balkan federation can be realised chiefly by the revolutionary energy of the proletariat. Consequently the organised, class-conscious proletariat, that is, Balkan Social Democracy, by developing the class consciousness of the proletariat and imbuing it with socialism, prepares the social force that will push the Balkan statelets onto the revolutionary path of the Balkan federation. On the other hand, the proletariat of the Balkan Peninsula has the greatest interest in the capitalist development of the Balkan states, as it is through capitalism that it will arrive at socialism. However, capitalism will develop most rapidly in these states and with the least suffering on the part of the proletariat when the latter fights to defend its interests — that is, the interests of its class — to shorten the working day, to increase workers' pay, for hygienic conditions at work, to lessen exploitation, for justice and freedom, etc. And the more constant and the more irreconcilable its struggle for its own interests, the better it will serve social development, the development of the productive forces, and liberation from exploitation. Consequently, Balkan Social Democracy most faithfully creates the preconditions for realising the Balkan federation by waging the irreconcilable class struggle of the proletariat. Otherwise the Balkan federation is absolutely impossible. If it is indeed possible, then it can only be achieved under the class pressure of the revolutionary proletariat.

Christian Rakovsky
The Balkan Confederation
and the Turkish-Bulgarian
Defensive Alliance⁸¹

WE have already explained sufficiently, and we repeat today, that in the idea of a grouping of the Balkan states the national-political moment predominates. The other main point we emphasised — which all the socialists, whether publicly or in private, accept — was the extent to which the Balkan confederation, or some such idea, can be realised even today under bourgeois society.⁸²

We do not know how nations will organise themselves in a socialist society, nor would we venture to prejudge this question. It is most likely that then, together with production, the rational organisation of which shall be the first task of socialist society, the racial element will continue to play a rôle. It is not difficult to believe that when, for example, language ceases to be a means of political oppression — as it is today — it could function as a marvellous instrument in uniting peoples related by ethnic origin.

Only socialist society can guarantee the full development of what is known as the national genius, that is to say, the combination of all those moral qualities that are expressed in each nation in the course of history.

The same socialist society will enable the free and comprehensive development both of each member of the nation individually and of the nation as an historic whole. However, this nationalism will be the antithesis of the present one, because racial hatreds will be absent from it.

However, these are questions for the future, whereas it is the Balkan confederation that corresponds to the needs of present-day bourgeois society. Of course, this does not prevent the proletariat from giving this bourgeois idea the form most suitable to its interests. This is its approach with all bourgeois reforms.

The bourgeoisie strives to adapt every reform that it is compelled to concede

81. From *Napred*, 14 October 1911. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković and Souška Alton. *Napred* (Forward, 1911-12) was a paper established and edited by Rakovsky to promote the reunification of the Broad and Narrow wings of the Bulgarian socialist movement, a mission confided to him by the Second International.

82. The day before the above article was published, Rakovsky argued that the basis for the creation of the Balkan confederation under capitalist society lay in the common situation of the Balkan states and Turkey: 'If the Balkan states were not faced with the danger of dismemberment or at least of being turned into protectorates, the idea of an alliance between them would not exist.' (KR, 'Za Balkanskata Konfederatsiya' ('On the Balkan Confederation'), *Napred*, 12 October 1911)

in accordance with its selfish class interests. The proletariat, on the contrary, wants to take each reform to its logical conclusion. That is why, with respect to the question of representative government, the bourgeoisie would be satisfied with a system of suffrage limited to property owners, while the proletariat wants universal, equal and secret suffrage. As far as social legislation and insurance is concerned, the bourgeoisie seeks to make the proletariat pay the full cost, while the proletariat, by contrast, seeks to place the burden on the state and the bosses.

The same is true of the idea of the Balkan confederation. The bourgeoisie would, of course, realise it in such a way as would satisfy only its class interests. By contrast, the proletariat seeks to realise this idea in such a way as would best guarantee its ability to pursue the class struggle. That is how the Balkan republic will emerge. And the proletariat will greet with joy every fact that appears as a step forwards towards this political ideal.

We see such a step forward in a Turkish-Bulgarian agreement that could even extend to a formal defensive alliance. It would be quite wrong to understand by this that we are advocating such a Turkish-Bulgarian defensive alliance as the goal that should replace our struggle for the Balkan confederal republic. This would mean that we were calling on the proletariat to retreat from its principles. We repeat once more that this was not our idea, and could not be so.

We only drew the logical conclusion from the idea of the Balkan confederation. Whoever agrees with this idea must accept the same conclusions.

And indeed today, when part of the Bulgarian press declares war on Turkey, and when in general the question of the relations between Bulgaria and Turkey has been placed on the agenda, it was, I repeat, quite natural for us to ask what kind of Bulgarian-Turkish relations would be most desirable from the point of view of furthering our goal — the Balkan confederation.

To this question, I reply — a Turkish-Bulgarian alliance. But does such a defensive alliance really bring us nearer to our goal?

*Rabotnicheski Vestnik*⁸³ does not think so, and, on the contrary, considers that this combination would be directed against Serbia. If this were so then, of course, a Bulgarian-Turkish alliance would distance us from our goal, and, instead of wishing it, we would have to reject this idea if others bandied it about.

However, *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* is mistaken. It does not provide an analysis of the relations on the Balkan peninsula, nor does it really understand the significance of a Bulgarian-Turkish alliance. The point is that by its very nature such an alliance would become the bulwark of the other Balkan states, which would rush to join it.⁸⁴

What makes it difficult today for the Balkan states to federate is the expansionist policy of most of them. It is a truism to say that all the small Balkan states want to expand at the expense of Turkey. However, if they were able to convince themselves that this is impossible, an understanding between them

83 *Workers' News* (1897-1939) was the paper of the Narrow socialists, and later of the Bulgarian Communist Party after the affiliation of the Narrows to the Comintern in 1919.

84 See note 80 above.

would be achieved much more easily. Today this circumstance is lacking. The Balkan governments live in the hope of the inevitable collapse of Turkey, and each one is preparing to grab the biggest slice of the latter.

Every event that would work towards the consolidation of Turkey is a defeat for the nationalist aims of the Balkan states. And a Turkish-Bulgarian alliance would have just such a consequence.

An alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia, even if that were possible, would not calm tempers. Such an alliance would be directed against Turkey, as both Bulgaria and Serbia are pretenders to the Turkish legacy. Consequently, such an alliance would be an offensive alliance even if it were called a defensive alliance.

But an alliance between Turkey and Bulgaria would not be directed against anyone, as neither would have any territorial pretensions on its neighbours. Moreover, it would not be directed against Serbia.

Another objection to the aforementioned alliance is that it would strengthen Young Turk reaction.

This is a supposition based on an incorrect identification of Turkey with the Young Turks. Such an alliance would consolidate the position of Turkey, but not that of the Young Turks; and, in any case, if their position were strengthened this would only be *temporary*.

The establishment of conditions for normal development in Turkey, and the consolidation of the constitutional regime, would lead to the removal of the Young Turk system of government.

And even under the present abnormal conditions, parliamentarianism in Turkey is leading to the break-up of the Muslim bloc and of the Turkish party. Arab and Albanian national groups are emerging, and the Young Turk party is dividing and breaking up. This beneficial political differentiation can only properly develop if there is external security. That a Bulgarian-Turkish alliance would have a positive effect on the internal development of Turkey is demonstrated by the circumstance that the most democratic elements there are in favour of it.

Dimitûr Blagoev

The Balkan Conference and the Balkan Federation⁸⁵

FOR social democrats, as we already emphasised two years ago in our articles concerning the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference, the Balkan federal republic is neither a fine phrase nor a utopian idea. For Social Democracy in

85. From *New View*, 1 December 1911. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković.

general, and for Balkan Social Democracy in particular, the Balkan federal republic concerns the question of its attitude towards the foreign policy of the European capitalist states, and especially that of the Balkan bourgeoisie.

In short, the policy of the European capitalist states towards the Balkan Peninsula is one of divide and rule, until the Balkan nations are finally conquered. This policy is responsible for the creation of the Balkan statelets and the fragmentation of the Balkan peoples. It is also responsible for the perpetuation of this situation in the Balkans.

The Balkan bourgeoisie counters this policy, on the one hand, with one of agreements and military alliances with these very same European states, and on the other, with a policy of agreements and military alliances between individual Balkan statelets and Turkey directed against one or another of the Balkan peoples. Finally, the Balkan bourgeoisie, especially its left wing,⁸⁶ which is usually petit-bourgeois in ideology, opposes the policy of the European capitalist states with the policy of the Balkan confederation.

It is the desire for national unification and plain territorial expansion that underlies the policy of the Balkan bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie of each of the Balkan states is by itself incapable of accomplishing this nationalist policy. Agreements and alliances with the European states or among some of the Balkan statelets are impossible. Thus the nationalist policy of the Balkan bourgeoisie leads to the exhaustion of the Balkan peoples, and to mutual suspicion, distrust and antagonism. This policy is especially ruinous for the Balkan proletariat.

How should Balkan Social Democracy counter the rapacious policy of the big European states and the nationalist politics of the Balkan bourgeoisie? To this question the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference categorically replied — by means of the policy of the Balkan federal republic and of proletarian class struggle.

Clearly this does not mean that by supporting the policy of the Balkan federation, Balkan Social Democracy adopts a policy which should really belong to a revolutionary bourgeoisie, or that it abandons its own tasks in order to realise the Balkan federation. It is in fact a question of pushing the Balkan peoples onto the path of the Balkan federal republic, of the pressure that Social Democracy can and must exert upon the bourgeoisie's foreign policy. When International Social Democracy declares itself against the policy of war and for a policy of peace, it knows full well that as long as capitalist society exists war is inevitable. Nevertheless, Social Democracy cannot but oppose the policy of the bourgeoisie with a policy of peace and of a federation of the peoples of Europe. In this way, it cannot avoid bringing pressure to bear on bourgeois society. But it is also clear that Social Democracy has no other effective means of doing so apart from the *class struggle of the proletariat*.

86. The petit-bourgeois republican Radical Democratic Party and the peasant-populist Agrarian National Union of Alexandr Stamboliski (Prime Minister of Bulgaria, 1919-23) both supported the idea of a Balkan confederation. Blagoev is also referring to the Broad socialists, whom he considered to be bourgeois politicians, and thus, by implication, to Rakovsky.

On the other hand, the Balkan federal republic is not an abstract, but a practical idea that the Balkan nations will be compelled to bring to life. The more European capitalism is pushed into a tight corner, the more it will seek to dominate the Balkans. It will thereby intensify the class struggle of the Balkan proletariat. But capitalist development and the intensification of the class struggle in the Balkans will increasingly oppress the Balkan bourgeoisie. Therefore, objective development will of its own accord one day impose the Balkan federation on the Balkan peoples. For the only way out for the Balkan peoples from their highly constrained and abnormal situation is through the Balkan federal republic. Finally, the Balkan federation can obviously be realised within the framework of bourgeois society, and its character, that is, whether it is more or less democratic, will depend on the intensity of the pressure exerted by Social Democracy. This will also depend on the many other circumstances under which it is realised.

By contrast, the left wing of the 'United Party',⁸⁷ led by the increasingly ridiculous Dr Rakovsky, upholds a different view, an apparently 'socialist' view of what the policy of Balkan Social Democracy should be in this matter. We can find these views in his articles on this issue published in the paper *Napred*. We will ignore the malicious epithets he directs at us 'Narrows', which are the product of the peculiar state of mind of a man who has lost his way. We are interested only in his views. He opposes the policy of Balkan Social Democracy adopted by First Balkan Social Democratic Conference, and in particular the policy of the Balkan federal republic, in favour of the policy of the *Balkan confederation*.

First of all, it is striking that Rakovsky, and together with him the 'left' wing of the 'United Party', but of course primarily Rakovsky, have been seduced by the idea of the 'Balkan confederation' ever since a group of his beloved 'Young Turks' began talking about this idea. Until then, the issue of the 'Balkan confederation' did not exist for him or for the entire 'left' of the 'United Party', or at least was nowhere mentioned in the columns of *Napred*, and in general did not enjoy such passionate support as it has ever since. Before then, as is well known, they were obsessed with a different idea, namely that of a military alliance between Turkey and Bulgaria. Obviously, it was the war between Turkey and Italy⁸⁸ and the resulting turn for the worse in the position of Rakovsky's beloved 'Young Turks' that compelled some of them to take up the idea of the 'Balkan

87. The Bulgarian Social Democratic Labour Party (United) was the name adopted by the Broad socialists when they merged in 1908 with two groups who had previously split from the Narrows over the refusal of the latter to work towards the unification of the Bulgarian socialist movement. Rakovsky, charged by the International Socialist Bureau, the 'executive' of the Second International, with laying the ground for unity between the two factions, became in this period the spokesman of the new (ex-Narrow) left of the Broads, which adopted his idea of a Balkan confederation.

88. At the end of September 1911, Italy occupied the Ottoman province of Tripolitania (modern Libya). The ensuing war dragged on until the declaration of war by the Balkan League on Turkey at the beginning of October 1912 forced the Porte to conclude peace, thus leaving the province in Italian hands.

confederation' and thus turned our Doctor from a proponent of a military alliance into an advocate of the 'Balkan confederation'!

The Doctor thinks that the 'Balkan confederation' is a much more practical, and therefore more feasible, idea than the Balkan federal republic. Therefore support for the Balkan federal republic is reactionary because it diverts the proletariat's attention from a cause of practical benefit to it, namely the 'Balkan confederation'. That is why he calls on the Balkan proletariat to support the idea of a 'Balkan confederation'. But the Doctor does not tell his readers, firstly, what this 'Balkan confederation' is, and secondly, why it is more practical, and thirdly, who is going to put it into practice and how, or more precisely — what rôle the Bulgarian proletariat will play in the achievement of the 'Balkan confederation'.

Like all of its supporters, as far as we can tell, Rakovsky understands by 'Balkan confederation' a defensive military alliance of the Balkan states among themselves and with Turkey. This 'Balkan confederation' indeed seems more practical than the idea of the Balkan federal republic. In fact it is nothing other than the military alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey previously advocated by Rakovsky, but now enlarged to a Balkan military alliance, a 'Balkan confederation'. It seems more practicable because it is more likely that the bourgeoisie would undertake it. Aren't the 'Young Turks' talking about a 'Balkan confederation' now that they find themselves in a tight spot? And now that the Doctor's beloved 'Young Turks' are talking of a 'Balkan confederation', this is for him a sufficient guarantee that the Balkan bourgeoisie will embrace that idea. Thus, according to Rakovsky, the class struggle of the proletariat is unnecessary, as the bourgeoisie is embracing the 'Balkan confederation', and it only remains for the Balkan proletariat to support the bourgeoisie in this its task, especially as the 'Balkan confederation', according to the Doctor, is a stage, a transition to the Balkan federal republic. The proletariat, in his opinion, should put aside the policy of the Balkan federation, and begin assisting the bourgeoisie in the realisation of the 'Balkan confederation' as a more realistic and practicable task. Otherwise, by fighting for a Balkan federation the proletariat would be aiding reaction, because it would be pushing back the achievement of the 'Balkan confederation' — this necessary stage on the way to the Balkan federation!

But the Doctor gives absolutely no proof that his 'Balkan confederation' is really more practical and realistic. In fact, it is easy to prove that it is neither. But that is not our aim here. We will limit ourselves here to noting the petit-bourgeois confusion of the bombastic Doctor.

VII: The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the Balkan Federation

Introduction

BY 1912, the Ottoman Empire, for so long the sick man of Europe, had at last taken to his death-bed. Following the Young Turk Revolution and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, the empire increasingly fell victim to enemies both at home and abroad. In the Balkans, the Albanian national question burst into flames with mass uprisings against the pan-Ottoman centralism of the Young Turks in successive years from 1909 to 1912. Elsewhere, Arab insurrections and Armenian troubles steadily sapped the empire's strength. Externally, the threat of imperialist dismemberment grew alarmingly. In September 1911, Italy's colonial pretensions led it to declare war over Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (modern Libya), which raged on for almost a year, and resulted in the loss of the last of the Ottoman possessions in North Africa.

The Balkan states seized this golden opportunity with both hands. In the course of 1912, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia formed a Balkan League directed against Ottoman Turkey. In October, they attacked, and within six weeks the First Balkan War was all but over.¹ The Bulgarians, who bore the brunt of the fighting, swept eastwards through Ottoman Macedonia into Thrace,² to within 20 miles of Constantinople (Istanbul), the Ottoman capital. The Serbs took most of what is today Macedonia and Kosovo, and then occupied northern Albania to secure access to the Adriatic Sea. The Greeks, meanwhile, drove northwards and captured the all-important port of Salonika.

The First Balkan War was immensely popular among the peoples of the participating states and their co-nationals within the empire. They regarded it as a war of national liberation which, after centuries of oppression, would finally free

1. War broke out again briefly in January 1913 when a coup in Constantinople brought another Young Turk regime to power. Their attempted counter-offensive was a disaster, and they were swiftly forced back to the negotiating table.
2. Thrace (the Ottoman vilayet of Adrianople) lays at the south-easternmost extremity of the Balkans where Europe meets Asia. Today it is divided between Bulgaria, Greece and European Turkey.

the Slav and Greek peoples of Turkey in Europe from the hated Ottoman yoke. By contrast, the Balkan socialists regarded it as a war of conquest, and flatly opposed it.

At the outbreak of war in October 1912, Christian Rakovsky drafted the first item in this section, the 'Manifesto of the Socialists of Turkey and the Balkans', setting out their anti-war position. Rakovsky here argues that the war is one of conquest by the Balkan states, whose partition of the peninsula would not only fail to achieve national unity because of its intermixed demography, but might also lead to new wars. Only a Balkan federation could therefore bring genuine unity for all the nations of the region. Instead, the most likely victors of the war would be the imperialist powers, who would pounce on the dismembered corpse of the Ottoman Empire.

Although they also opposed the war, the Serbian social democrats refused to sign the Manifesto, objecting, it appears, to those passages in which Rakovsky outlined an essentially reformist approach to the Ottoman Empire.³ Advocating cultural autonomy for the nations of the empire plus a series of political and social reforms, Rakovsky argued that only such a programme would 'give the Muslim worker and peasant masses the minimum of satisfaction which will attach them to the new [constitutional] regime' brought to power by the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Despite its evident shortcomings, which he acknowledged, Rakovsky continued to regard this regime as the basis for progress in the region.⁴ For the Serbs, however, this approach opened the door to the *re-consolidation* of Ottoman Turkey as a reformed power in the Balkans. Instead, they envisaged a revolution of the masses *against* the new regime as the indispensable stepping-stone to the creation of a Balkan federation.⁵ In addition, Rakovsky was more supportive of Ottoman territorial integrity than the Serbs could abide. They refrained both from supporting its integrity, rightly sensing that this would compromise genuine revolutionary opposition to the Ottoman ruling class and state, and from advocating its partition by the Balkan bourgeoisies.

The Serbian refusal to sign may also have reflected wider unease within the party regarding opposition to the war. The next piece in this section, entitled 'Memoirs of the First Balkan War', is by Triša Kaclerović, one of two socialist deputies in the Skupština, the Serbian Parliament, when war broke out. This extract from his hitherto unpublished memoirs, written during the Tito years, is

3. Dimităr Blagoev's Bulgarian Narrow socialists appended their signature only at the very last minute. This is the only declaration they signed with the Menshevik-like Broad socialists, with whom they had split acrimoniously in 1903. The Broad leader, Yanko Sakarov, the only socialist deputy in 1912, voted against the war.
4. Rakovsky was here partly reflecting the influence of the 'social-Ottomanist' wing of the Second International, most commonly associated with the figure of Jean Jaurès (1859-1914), the French socialist leader and defender of the Young Turks.
5. The Serbian socialists tended to treat the 1908 Young Turk revolution as more of a military coup than a genuine revolution. When the masses participated in defeating an attempted counter-revolution in 1909, however, Tucović was more enthusiastic, writing of a newly awakened revolutionary Turkey as the potential 'axle' of a Balkan federation (Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana Dela* [Collected Works], Volume 2, Belgrade, 1975, p429).

of particular interest because Kaclerović, together with the leading editor of the party newspaper, Dušan Popović, disagreed with the official stance on the war, arguing for 'less active opposition' to it.⁶ Popović had written an article entitled 'Out with the Turks!' which the party refused to publish, and he eventually resigned his position as editor. Kaclerović, meanwhile, decided not to attend the Skupština vote on war credits, leaving his colleague, Dragiša Lapčević, to record the only vote in opposition.

In his memoirs, Kaclerović explains that, although he and Popović were resolutely opposed to the war, they disagreed with the party's failure to stress that 'the first and greatest evil was the Turkish regime, which could at the time have only been destroyed by a war', as the Balkan peoples were not strong enough to do so themselves by revolutionary means. What this position in fact recognised was the *progressive* character of the war, which, regardless of the subjective intentions of the Balkan states, was for national liberation and against Ottoman feudalism. Nevertheless, both Kaclerović and Popović stopped short of what their opponents within the party saw correctly as the logical conclusion of their stance — of supporting the war, albeit critically.

Kaclerović and Popović were not alone in wrestling with a position that would have adequately reflected the dual character of the First Balkan War. For example, Trotsky's Balkan journalism, on the one hand betrays a profound sympathy for the struggle of the Balkan peoples against oppressive empires, but, on the other hand, a refusal to support any war by the Balkan ruling classes against such empires.⁷ Lenin's Bolsheviks, together with the rest of the Second International, also opposed the war.⁸ Nevertheless, Lenin was quick to applaud the victories of the Balkan League states, which he described as 'tremendous'. He wrote:

Although the alliance which has come into being in the Balkans is an alliance of monarchies and not republics, and although this alliance has come about through war and not through revolution, a great step has nevertheless been taken towards doing away with the survivals of medievalism in Eastern Europe.⁹

6. This is how Trotsky described the position in a footnote to a letter from Popović he published in his Paris newspaper, *Nash Slovo*, in 1915, which appears in Section VIII below on the First World War.
7. See Leon Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars 1912-13* (New York, 1980). It is clear that Trotsky learnt much from the Balkan socialists, particularly Rakovsky and the Serbians, to whom he was politically close. Trotsky recounts that many rank-and-file socialists enthusiastically supported the war despite the official position of their parties (*ibid.*, p157).
8. See the Bolshevik manifesto on the war in John Riddell (ed), *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International 1907-16: The Preparatory Years* (New York, 1984), p84.
9. VI Lenin, 'A New Chapter of World History', *Collected Works*, Volume 18 (Moscow, 1963), p369. In a later article, 'The Social Significance of the Serbo-Bulgarian Victories', *ibid.*, pp397-9, Lenin stressed that the victories amounted to a bourgeois revolution against feudalism akin to 1848. He added that liberation would have been far less costly had it been achieved by revolutionary means. But like Kaclerović, Lenin noted that war rather than revolution took place because of the disunity of the peasants and the small size of the working class. Compare

It is also worth noting that none other than Dimitrije Tucović, who led the Serbian Party in opposition to the war, later confided to his diary in 1914 that in fact the war had been 'wholly in accordance with historical development' as its results promised to bring 'improved relations, peace and progress' to the Balkans.¹⁰

The position of the Balkan socialists and others on the First Balkan War reflected two related factors. The first was the essentially pacifist orientation of the Second International, which opposed wars and supported the *status quo* for fear that any conflict could lead to a general conflagration. In early 1912, Rakovsky declared: 'We are against all wars, since even wars of liberation are wars of conquest.'¹¹ The second factor was the belief that the Balkan states could not act independently of imperialism, and that therefore any conflict in the region threatened to embroil the Great Powers in a cataclysmic world war. Rosa Luxemburg later wrote that the Balkan Wars were 'objectively only a fragment of the general conflict' between the imperialist powers, a view held by most leading Balkan socialists at the time.¹²

But in fact the First Balkan War caught the imperialist powers by surprise. While Russia had cultivated a Balkan League as an alliance against Austria-Hungary, the Balkan states turned their guns on Turkey instead. In a stunning confirmation of the arguments raised by figures such as Luxemburg herself in the debate in 1896-97 on Russia's rôle in the Balkans,¹³ the concerted alliance of the Balkan states enabled them to escape the embrace of the imperialist powers and strike out in an anti-imperialist direction of their own. Indeed, when Bulgaria's military successes brought them to within striking distance of Constantinople, the much-coveted goal of Russian foreign policy, the Tsar made it clear that he would not countenance the taking of the Ottoman capital.¹⁴ The transformation of the Balkan League from an instrument of Russian policy into an instrument of Balkan policy was, at best, only partially understood by the Balkan socialists

this, however, with the German socialist August Bebel (1840-1913) who privately wished for a Turkish victory, presumably for anti-Russian reasons, while blithely conceding that 'it is not certain that the Balkan problem would thereby be settled' (quoted in George B Leon, *The Greek Socialist Movement and the First World War*, New York, 1976, p131).

10. Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana Dela*, Volume 8 (Belgrade, 1980), p351.

11. Quoted in Francis Conte, *Christian Rakovski (1878-1941)* (New York, 1989), p62. Trotsky recounts that a Bulgarian bourgeois politician attacked his opposition to the First Balkan War thus: 'For you, all this is simple: you reject war altogether, at any time and under any circumstances. A war in the Balkans or a war in Patagonia, aggressive or defensive, for liberation or for conquest — you make no distinctions. But we consider it necessary to investigate the real historical content of the war, the given war, the war in the Balkans, and we can't shut our eyes to the fact that what is involved here is the liberation of the Slav people from Turkish rule.' It has to be said that this reads like a good Marxist critique of Trotsky's position (*The Balkan Wars*, op cit, p325).

12. Rosa Luxemburg, 'The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in the German Social Democracy', *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York, 1970), p309.

13. See Section II: Marxism and the Eastern Question: Challenging the Orthodoxy 1896-1897 above.

14. The French Premier, Raymond Poincaré (1860-1934), commented laconically that Russia 'is trying to put on the brakes, but it is she who started the motor' (see LS Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, London, 2000, p535).

who remained steadfastly loyal to the indiscriminately anti-war straitjacket of the Second International.

The decisive break with this position was made by Lenin during the First World War. Writing in 1915, Lenin reflected on what position socialists should have adopted if the world war had not become a general conflagration, but had instead remained an isolated Balkan conflict between the original combatants of 1914, Austria-Hungary and Serbia. He wrote:

It is only in Serbia and among the Serbs that we can find a national liberation movement of long standing, embracing millions, 'the masses of the people', a movement of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a 'continuation'. If this war were an isolated one, that is, if it were not connected with the general European war, with the selfish and predatory aims of Britain, Russia, etc, it would have been the *duty* of all socialists to desire the success of the Serbian *bourgeoisie* — this is the only correct and absolutely inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the national element in the present war.¹⁵

It is clear that Lenin had come close to this position during the First Balkan War in 1912, but the Bolsheviks had then remained loyal to the overriding anti-war strategy of the Second International. Following the collapse of the International in 1914, such loyalties could at last be discarded.

The Second Balkan War of June and July 1913, which pitted Bulgaria against Greece, Serbia and Romania starkly demonstrated what the Balkan socialists had understood very well — that steps towards unity from above by the Balkan ruling classes were bound to be as short-lived as they were superficial. Ultimately, therefore, a Balkan federation could *only* be created by workers and peasants from below in revolutionary struggle against their own ruling classes.

This second conflict arose over the vexed question of liberated Macedonia and how it would be divided. At the insistence of Austria-Hungary and Italy, the London Ambassadors Conference of December 1912, at which the Great Powers sought to regain control over events in the Balkans, forced Serbia to withdraw from northern Albania, which it had occupied in order to gain access to the Adriatic Sea. As a result, Serbia looked to compensate itself with Macedonian territory at Bulgaria's expense, while Greece was at loggerheads with the Bulgarians over the strategically vital Macedonian port of Salonika on the Aegean Sea. These tensions exploded in June 1913 when Bulgaria launched a pre-emptive strike against the Serbs and Greeks, only to be comprehensively defeated at the Battle of Bregalnica. Meanwhile, Romania took the opportunity to occupy the much-contested Dobrudja border region of northern Bulgaria, while Turkey launched an offensive against Bulgarian lines near Constantinople, regaining a toehold in Europe.

15. VI Lenin, 'The Collapse of the Second International', *Collected Works*, Volume 21 (Moscow, 1964), p235.

The next item in this section is on the Second Balkan War, and is taken from *Towards a Balkan Federation*, the work of the Bulgarian Narrow socialist, Hristo Kabakchiev, which appeared in 1913. This book is arguably the single most important work by a socialist to appear on the Balkan federal idea before the First World War. In the extracts below, Kabakchiev traces the way in which the Balkan League fell apart once its goal of expelling Ottoman Turkey from Europe had been achieved. Launching a fierce attack on the policies of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, Kabakchiev also astutely analyses the rôle played by the imperialist powers in fomenting divisions amongst the Balkan states in order to reassert control over events. Of particular interest is his analysis of Russia's rôle. Kabakchiev recognises that, despite all its defects, the Balkan League had become an autonomous anti-Ottoman force over which the Tsar could only reimpose his control by encouraging Balkan rivalries. Bulgaria's disastrous defeat in the Second Balkan War, which left it with only a small portion of Macedonia, led to a wave of anti-government feeling. In the elections of November 1913, the Narrow Socialists won 18 seats, while the Broads, who also opposed the war, won 17, marking the breakthrough of socialism into Bulgarian political life.¹⁶

The final item in this section is an extract from one of the classic works of Serbian Marxism on the national question, *Serbia and Albania*, by Dimitrije Tucović, published in 1914. In this extract, Tucović provides a powerful critique of the expansionist plans of the Serbian bourgeoisie which, by its brutal occupation of northern Albania in the drive to gain an outlet to the Adriatic Sea, had incurred the wrath of the Albanian population. As a result, the Albanians were driven into the arms of two imperialist powers, Austria-Hungary and Italy, who demanded the creation of an independent Albanian state as a block to Serbia's access to the sea. Although prepared to defend Albanian independence, Tucović does not however favour the creation of another petty statelet in the peninsula which would cut the Albanians off from sharing in the economic and political advantages of a wider regional union. As a result, they would fall prey to imperialist subjugation, as Austro-Hungarian and Italian intervention for an Albanian state was demonstrating. For Tucović the Albanians can only gain lasting national liberation and unity as an autonomous unit within a Balkan federation.¹⁷

Tucović's central argument, however, is that the enmities between the Balkan peoples, brought about by the competing expansionist goals of the Balkan

16. Tsar Ferdinand refused to accept these results, and annulled the elections. Terrified, he asked Serbia for help in the event of a revolution in Bulgaria. Socialist results were cut by almost half in the elections of early 1914 as a result of police repression and the waning of anti-war feeling.
17. Tucović's colleague Dragiša Lapčević later wrote that the Serbian socialists were prepared 'unconditionally [to] respect Albania's independence and work towards its inclusion as an independent member of a federation of Balkan republics' (*Rat i Srpska Socijalna Demokracija [War and Serbian Social Democracy]* (Belgrade, 1925), p166. Nevertheless, a tiny, defenceless Albanian state was not the solution they favoured, which is why they never failed to stress the need for Albania to join a Balkan federation to protect itself from foreign imperialist predators and local nationalist aggressors.

ruling classes, had had the disastrous consequence of entrenching imperialist control over the Balkans. This has a strong contemporary relevance. The oppression of the Kosovan Albanians by the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milošević drove them into the arms of the United States, which exploited their plight to bomb Serbia in 1999 and entrench its power in the Balkans as part of Nato's US-sponsored expansionist drive eastwards into the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

Tucović's critique of Serbian nationalism is therefore, simultaneously and inseparably, a powerful *anti-imperialist* critique. It is extraordinary that in a recent book on the Kosovo question by Stephen Schwartz, with a preface by Christopher Hitchens,¹⁷ Tucović's attack on the Serbian bourgeoisie's oppression of the Albanians is misappropriated to provide a 'socialist' cover for the bombing of Serbia by US imperialism in 1999. Concentrating exclusively on his critique of Serbian nationalism, Schwartz and Hitchens utterly fail to give expression to the uncompromisingly *anti-imperialist* tenor of Tucović's politics. This distortion and truncation of his thought demand that we put the record straight. The extract from *Serbia and Albania* below demonstrates with irresistible clarity that for Tucović the struggle against nationalism in pursuit of the ideal of a Balkan federation was in practice an integral part of the struggle against imperialism.

Dragan Plavić

Christian Rakovsky Manifesto of the Socialists of Turkey and the Balkans¹⁸

TO the working people of the Balkans and Asia Minor! — To the workers' International! — To public opinion!

War is at our door. When these lines appear, it will in all probability be an accomplished fact.

17. Stephen Schwartz, *Kosovo: Background to a War* with a preface by Christopher Hitchens (London, 2000). The bibliography reveals that Schwartz does not seem to have even read Tucović's *Serbia and Albania* in full. Instead, he consulted a text of selected articles and extracts by Serbian social democrats, including Tucović, published in Slovenia in 1989. This text was compiled for political use by the Slovenians against the Serbs in the bitter, internal dispute that preceded the collapse of Yugoslavia. As such, it focused heavily on the Kosovo question and the anti-nationalist credentials of the Serbian social democrats. It is not therefore a reliable source for a properly rounded view of Tucović.
18. Dated 12 October 1912. Translated from the French by Dragan Plavić. This translation is based on the English translation of the time, for which see *Bulletin Périodique du Bureau Socialiste International* (3^e année, N°9), pp5-7.

But we, the socialists of the Balkan countries and the Near East, who are more directly affected by the war, will not allow ourselves to be swept away by the chauvinist wave. We raise our voices still more loudly against the war, and we call upon the masses of workers and peasants together with all sincere democrats to unite with us in opposing to the policy of bloody violence, which brings in its train the most disastrous consequences, our conception of international solidarity.

The proletariat of the Balkans has nothing to gain from this adventure, because both the vanquished and the victors will see militarism, bureaucracy, political reaction and financial speculation, with their usual following of heavy taxes and price rises, of exploitation and profound misery, rise ever stronger and more arrogant still on piles of corpses and ruins.

Moreover, for the Balkan countries, the war will have other consequences resulting from their political and geographical situation.

In the event that they emerge victorious from the conflict, and the Ottoman Empire becomes the object of partition, the lion's share, that is the richest regions economically and the most important points strategically, will become prey to the great capitalist powers, who have been detaching territories in the East limb by limb.

Austria at Salonika, Russia on the Bosphorus and in Eastern Anatolia, Germany occupying the rest of Anatolia, and Italy southern Albania — this will probably be the map of the East after the eventual downfall of the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, on the day they fall into the clutches of the Powers, the independence of the Balkan states will be at an end. The political and public liberty of the people will be destroyed by militarism and monarchical autocracy, which, fortified by their victory over the Turks, will demand new credits for their armies as well as new privileges for their sovereigns. And after these hard trials, the national struggles between the peoples will not be over. They will become even more bitter, each one aspiring to hegemony.

A victorious Turkey will result in the recrudescence of religious fanaticism and Muslim chauvinism — the triumph of political reaction — the loss of the few improvements obtained at the price of so many sacrifices in the internal government of the country. Moreover, it will bring about the triumph of Austrian and Russian imperialisms, who will pose as saviours of the defeated Balkan powers, in order to extend their self-interested protectorate over the devastated peoples.

In order to justify the war, the nationalists of the Balkan states invoke the necessity of realising their national unity, or at least of obtaining political autonomy for their nationals under Turkish domination.

It is not the socialist parties who oppose the realisation of the political unity of the elements of each nation.

The right of nationalities to an autonomous life is the direct consequence of political and social equality and of the suppression of all class, caste, racial or religious privileges, demanded by the Workers' International. But will this unity

be realised by partitioning the populations and territories of Turkey amongst the small Balkan states?

Will the Turks, now under Bulgarian, Serb or Greek domination, have their national unity? Will the Serbs of Novi Pazar and of Old Serbia,¹⁹ the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Albanians of Macedonia, whom partition would eventually place under the yoke of Austria or Italy, the Armenians and the Kurds of Eastern Anatolia, the Turks, the Greeks and the Bulgarians of the vilayet²⁰ of Adrianople, who might become Russia's prey, realise their national unity?

The bourgeoisie and nationalism are powerless to establish true and lasting national unity. What will be created by one war may be destroyed by another war.

National unity, founded on the subjugation of the national elements of other races, bears within it an original sin, which threatens it constantly. Nationalism only changes the names of masters and the degree of oppression, but it does not abolish them. Only political democracy with real equality for every element, regardless of race, religion or class, can create real national unity.

The nationalist argument is, in reality, only a pretext for the Balkan governments.

The real motive of their policy is nothing but the tendency towards economic and territorial expansion, which characterises all countries that undertake capitalist production. Turkey's neighbours seek from it the same advantages as the Great Powers, who are hidden behind the small states: they want markets for their goods, for the investment of their capital and for the employment of the bureaucratic personnel who are surplus to requirements in the offices of the metropolis.

But if we point out the weighty responsibility of the Balkan states for the coming war, as well as in the past when they obstructed the internal transformation of Turkey, and if we accuse European diplomacy, which has never wanted to see serious reforms in Turkey, of duplicity, we do not in any way wish to diminish the responsibility of the Turkish governments themselves. We denounce them too to the civilised world, to the people of the empire and particularly to the Muslim masses without whose help they would not have been able to maintain their domination.

We reproach the Turkish regime for the complete absence of real liberty and equality for the nationalities — an absolute lack of security and guarantee for life, or for the rights and possessions of the citizen — the non-existence of justice and a well-organised and impartial administration. It has maintained a system of the most heavy and most vexing taxes. It has turned a deaf ear to all the demands for reform for Muslim and non-Muslim workers and peasants. It has supported armed feudal lords and nomadic tribes against defenceless farmers.

By their proverbial inertia, the Turkish governments have done nothing but provoke and sustain misery, ignorance, emigration and brigandage, and numerous massacres in Anatolia and Rumelia, in a word, anarchy which serves today as the pretext for intervention and war.

The hope that the new regime would put an end to the past by inaugurating a new

19. Mainly Kosovo, the heartland of the medieval kingdoms of Serbia

20. An Ottoman administrative region

policy has been dashed. Successive Young Turk governments have not only continued the errors of the past; they have used the authority and the prestige of a false parliamentarism granted to Turkey so that a system of denationalisation and oppression, and of excessive bureaucratic centralism could be implemented, which would smother the rights of nationalities and the demands of the labouring masses.

The men of the new regime have also surpassed the old one in certain respects, which had raised systematic assassination of its political adversaries to the heights of a system of government.

But we acknowledge that the people — and only the people — have the right to dispose of their lives. To the war which with all our power we repudiate as the way to solve political and social problems, we oppose the action of the conscious and organised masses.

To the bloody ideal of the nationalists, who would dispose of the lives of their peoples by war and haggle with their rights and their territories, we respond by affirming the imperative necessity, already proclaimed by the Inter-Balkan Socialist Conference of Belgrade in 1909, of closely uniting all the peoples of the Balkans and the Near East without distinction of race or religion.

Without such a federation of the peoples of Eastern Europe, national unity will be neither possible nor lasting for them. There will be no rapid economic and social progress, because their development will be continually threatened by the perpetual return of internal reaction and foreign domination.

As regards the Ottoman Empire in particular, we consider that only radical reform of its internal relations can re-establish peace and normal conditions of life, ward off foreign intervention and the danger of war, and at last render a democratic Balkan federation possible.

It is not by endeavouring to revive projects half a century old, inherited from a short-sighted bureaucracy, that the Turkish regime will be able to solve the problem of nationalities; it is by granting true equality, by granting complete autonomy to the nationalities for their cultural institutions — schools, churches, etc — and by establishing local government (self-government) in districts, cantons and communes, with proportional representation for ethnic groups and for parties, with equality for languages.

Only an administration in which the various ethnic groups of the empire are represented will provide the necessary guarantee of impartiality.

Only agrarian reform, tax reform, social legislation and guarantees for rights of association and assembly will give the Muslim worker and peasant masses the minimum of satisfaction which will attach them to the new regime.

These reforms may annoy the Turkish bureaucracy, that is to say those few thousand individuals attached to their privileges. But they will to the highest degree benefit the Turkish people, whom the present regime reduces to the exclusive rôle of soldier and policeman, rushing to every frontier and every province in order to combat the calamities heaped on this country by Turkish incapacity and oligarchy.

The solution of the great problems that trouble the populations of the Ottoman Empire will guarantee the national security of the Muslims, and will enable them peacefully to turn their attentions to their economic, political and social development.

This is the programme for whose realisation we appeal, not only for the co-operation of the proletariat of the Balkans, but also to that of international socialism.

We, the socialists of the Balkans and the Near East, have a profound consciousness of the double rôle we have to play with regard to the proletariat of the world and to ourselves.

Stemming the belligerent tide unleashed by governments and the chauvinist press, struggling against sentiments implanted and nourished by a warped education predisposed to favour the struggle between nationalities and class domination, we will not fail to fulfil our duty of international solidarity. In fact, we are simply outposts, because the war in the Balkans brings the general peace into imminent danger. By rousing all the capitalist appetites of the great states, and by giving preponderance in political life to imperialist elements, greedy for conquest, it may not only provoke war between nations, but also civil war. And, as the capitalist governments of several countries have been driven into their last strongholds by the successive victories of the proletariat, they will not fail to take the opportunity offered them to drown the masses in blood, or by restrictive legislation to stifle our movement for emancipation, civilisation and human progress.

For weeks and months, we have led a campaign against war. But it is particularly at this moment that we protest the most loudly. We express our firm intention to uphold with all our power the struggle of the world proletariat against the war, against militarism, against capitalist exploitation, and for liberty, for equality, for the emancipation of classes and nationalities, in a word, for peace.

Down with war! Long live the international solidarity of the people!
The Socialists of Turkey and the Balkans

Triša Kaclerović Memoirs of the First Balkan War²¹

HERE I want to stress that although this war against Turkey was popular among all Serbs, nevertheless the party took a decisive stand against the war. The entire party leadership of the time agreed with the party's declaration given to the Skupština. But there were disagreements on one matter which, although not on a point of principle, provoked a rather sharper conflict in the thinking of the party leadership at the time. Later, at the first subsequent party congress, which could not be held until 30 January 1914 and which was also the

21. From *Zbirka Triša Kaclerović*, written in 1946, Arhiv Srbije. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić.

last party congress, this conflict caused quite an uproar among some delegates, albeit an unnecessary one.

This is what it was all about. When we adopted the text of the Skupština declaration, the party Secretary, Dušan Popović, and I were of the view that the declaration should be made complete by adding a Marxist analysis of the specific historical character of the war. Since it was already stated in our declaration, entirely correctly, that 'Turkey is a misfortune for all the peoples of the Balkans', that 'the feudal system and the caste regime are an evil' for the Balkans, that we are opponents of the *status quo*, and that we are not for the maintenance of the feudal and caste empire of the Turks — then we ought also to have said that the Turkish regime, on the one hand, and the *status quo* policy conducted by the imperialist powers, on the other, had created such an unbearable economic, political and national state of affairs in the Balkans, that it was bound to lead to war and had to be brought to an end by it, in order to create the conditions for modern economic, political and cultural life, for the development of the Balkan peoples as a whole, and for the class struggle of the proletariat. But despite the positive, historical rôle of the war for the Balkans, we social democrats cannot vote for this war for the following reasons.

Wars in the Balkans might provoke a European war and threaten world peace for whose maintenance the international proletariat fights. And this, the maintenance of world peace, above all else takes first place, for the Serbian Social Democratic Party as well.

The agreement on the military league was reached without asking the people, secretly behind their backs and the Skupština.

This agreement envisaged the division of the Balkan territories of Turkey between the Allies, and this will cause military conflicts between them, which will be even more fatal for their future relations.

This division of territory was carried out without the knowledge and the assent of the peoples who live on that territory, and this is against the principle of national self-determination.

We two, Dušan and I, thought that by stating the fact of the historical rôle of the war, the party would not in any way have weakened its principled stand against it, because all the good reasons for being against war were on the party's side; but that in this way the party's declaration would have represented a sound Marxist work. But the majority of the party leadership rejected this demand. Dušan Popović had prepared an article for *Radničke Novine* setting out our thoughts, in which he characterised the war against Turkey as a wholesale revolution of a kind for the Balkans. But not even this article was published. Popović was angry about this — and when, before our vote against extraordinary war credits, we were to give out a statement, and when we again tried in a proper way to insert into our parliamentary speech our earlier thoughts, again without success, then a quarrel, a sharp exchange of words, almost broke out. In anger, Dušan Popović told one of the paper's contributors, Nikola Bogdanović:²²

22. Nikola Bogdanović was a lawyer and member of the editorial committee of *Radničke Novine*.

'Here, take the paper and edit it as you see fit.' But this was only momentary. This competition in 'leftism' also got on my nerves, so I did not attend the sitting of the Skupština at which the vote on war credits was taken! I was then of the opinion, which I hold to this day, that our declaration, by adopting our proposal, would have been a good, complete Marxist document, which would not in any way have weakened our standpoint on the situation in the Balkans as it then was in relation to our principled stand for a federation of the Balkan peoples. War is an evil, and the armed conflict between the Balkan states which we foresaw and which then broke out, is an even greater evil. But in those circumstances in the Balkans, the first and greatest evil was the Turkish regime, which could at the time have only been destroyed by a war, even one carried out in the way it was, because the Balkan peoples were not ready or strong enough then to carry out this task directly themselves, nor was the proletariat, which ought to have been at the head of this great movement.

Hristo Kabakchiev

From Victory to Defeat

The Second Balkan War²³

THE Balkan League, founded in order to destroy Turkey and conquer its European provinces, quickly began to collapse after the accomplishment of its aims. It was not even able to survive past the first decisive victories over Turkey, and serious disagreements already broke out between Greece and Bulgaria during the capture of Salonika. The disagreements soon passed over into open conflicts once Bulgaria attempted to establish its administrative authorities and garrisons in those Macedonian towns and provinces that the Bulgarian government considered belonged to Bulgaria according to the agreements concluded between the allies, but which had been seized by the Serbs and the Greeks.

Already in its address to the Basel Congress of the International of November 1912,²⁴ Bulgarian Social Democracy had declared that the military-dynastic alliance of the Balkan states would collapse as soon as it had accomplished its immediate task, the overthrow of Turkey, and that this alliance could bring neither national unification nor independence to the Balkan peoples.

Of course, the ruling classes and dynasties of the Balkans dressed up their

He was later a social-patriot.

23. From *Towards a Balkan Federation*, 1913. Translated from the Bulgarian by Andreja Živković.

24. The Second International called the Basel Congress in response to the outbreak of the First Balkan War.

plans for conquest and aspirations to hegemony in the mantle of 'national ideals'. The Bulgarian bourgeoisie has first place in this respect. The Bulgarian ministers, diplomats, writers and journalists repeated daily that Bulgaria was warring with Turkey in order to achieve the national unification of the Bulgarian people, and if it demanded the annexation of Macedonia and Salonika, this was only in order to realise and complete the unification of the nation.

Macedonia consists of three former Turkish vilayets, Salonika, Bitola and Skopje. Turkey does not possess official population statistics, and so there is no official data as to the numerical relations between the nationalities in these three vilayets. But according to the (comparatively) most trustworthy data that exists, the total population of the these vilayets numbered three million before the war, of which, according to head of the Bulgarian state statistical service, Kiril Popov, the Bulgarians numbered 1.1 million in 1895 and 870 000 in 1909. In 1912, according to the same source, this figure was even smaller.

Even if we take the latter figure as reliable, the Bulgarians constitute only 29 per cent of the total population of Macedonia. After them in size come the Albanians with around 640 000 or 21 per cent, the Turks with 550 000 or 18 per cent, the Greeks with 240 000 or eight per cent and the Serbs with 210 000 or seven per cent. It can be seen from these data that the Bulgarians are more numerous than the other nations inhabiting the Macedonian vilayets taken separately, but in relation to the total population they make up even less than a third. From the same facts, it can be seen that none of the nations in Macedonia constitutes an absolute majority. Also, the population in Macedonia is so mixed that cities and areas where one nationality predominates are rare. The Bulgarians predominate in some cities and areas of western and central Macedonia, the Greeks in southern Macedonia, and the Serbs in northern Macedonia.

Thus it is clear that the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria would signify forcing into its borders a population two-thirds of which consists of foreign national elements, and only a third Bulgarian and not even a full third at that. Such is the national unification to which the Bulgarian bourgeoisie aspires. Together with the unification of the Bulgarian people, this would bring the separation of hundreds of thousands of Greeks, Turks, Albanians and Serbs from their own national entities, and their subjugation to a new national slavery, that of Bulgaria. But national unification is even less the determining factor, or the central goal of Serbian policy. Serbia has conquered western and central Macedonia for itself, where the Serbian population in no instance surpasses 10 per cent of the total population. It is not national, but capitalist interests and dynastic motives that drove Serbia into the new war. Remaining deceived in its hopes of conquering northern Albania and of coming out onto the Adriatic, Serbia wanted compensation in the form of the Macedonian lands it was occupying, and, by means of being next door to a weaker state like Greece, to dispose of the harbour of Salonika on the Aegean.

If Serbia was following a really national policy, its gaze should have been turned to the north, to the South Slav provinces of Austria-Hungary, where the greater part of the Serbian people lives, and in this case Serbia should not have

warred with its Balkan neighbours over the conquest of regions made up of other nations, but should have maintained the closest friendship with them in order to be able to achieve its national unification with their support.

And Greece, in order to keep hold of Salonika, aspired to conquer and in this way win a large part of its environs which, however, were principally made up of Bulgarian villages. On the other hand, Greece aspired to part of southern Albania, which was mainly inhabited by Albanians. Thus, like the other Balkan states, Greece also strove above all for the economic, strategic and political 'consolidation' of its territory. National unification played only a secondary rôle in the policy of the Balkan states, as a means of achieving their main expansionist aims, and as an ideological disguise for their policy of conquest.

However, the Balkan states were driven to such a policy, which for the sake of the goal of conquest and the striving for hegemony over the Balkans lost sight of national unification, not only by the capitalist interests and aspirations of their ruling classes and dynasties, but also by the big European states encircling them.

Thus, Austria-Hungary already in its secret convention with King Milan²⁵ of 1882 promised to give Macedonia to Serbia in exchange for an obligation on the part of the latter to renounce all pretensions to Bosnia and Herzegovina. From then on up to this very day, the Habsburg Monarchy has not ceased to direct the gaze of Serbia to the south, to Macedonia, in order to deflect it from its natural aspirations to national unification with the numerous Serbian nation groaning under the Austro-Hungarian yoke. In the recent Balkan crisis, Austria-Hungary continued with the same policy, and is one of the instigators pushing the former Balkan allies to war.

Similarly, the Bulgarians were pushed towards war against their allies by the great capitalist powers. Ever since Russia recognised Ferdinand's dynasty,²⁶ Bulgaria has always vacillated between Austria-Hungary and Russia, without being able to exploit their antagonism in the Balkans for an independent national policy. On the contrary, in order to attain the goals of its nationalist, expansionist and dynastic policy, Bulgaria has itself sought now the support of Austria-Hungary, now that of Russia, against its neighbours, and has in this way by its own doing more and more increased its dependence on these two powers. After the overthrow of Turkey with the help of Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, Bulgaria, again with foreign support, that of Russia, sought to grab the lion's share of the legacy of European Turkey, to destroy the combined pressure of its former allies and to secure hegemony over the Balkans.

But here the entire, fatal short-sightedness of the nationalist and dynastic policy of Bulgaria came to the fore. Bulgaria was faced with two paths; along the first it could come directly to an agreement with its allies, consolidate its alliance

25. King Milan Obrenović (1854-1901) was Prince (1868-82) and then King (1882-89) of Serbia, whose reign was characterised by his subservience to Austria-Hungary
26. Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1861-1948) was a German aristocrat who was Prince (1887-1908) and then King (1908-18) of Bulgaria.

with them on broad economic and political foundations, using the authority and influence that it had won in the first war, and inaugurate an independent national policy by wresting itself free of the guardianship of the Great Powers; the second path was that of recklessly following the lust for conquest of the bourgeoisie and monarchism and the 'advice' of the big capitalist states, a path that would inevitably lead Bulgaria into catastrophe. Bulgaria chose the second path!

★ ★ ★

In reality, the defeat of Bulgaria stands in a tight causal relationship with its victory. The victory of Bulgaria is due to the Balkan League, without which it would have been incapable of destroying Turkey, not only because its own forces were insufficient for such a task, but also because without a Balkan alliance Bulgaria in a war with Turkey would have been threatened with attack by the other Balkan states. However, the defeat of Bulgaria is also due to the Balkan League, which was established solely for the overthrow of Turkey, and Bulgaria, occupying the central rôle in this military-dynastic alliance, did nothing to consolidate it and tie it to an economic-political union, a union within whose framework the national antagonisms between the Balkan peoples could be pacified, antagonisms that had inevitably to break out after the victory over Turkey.

The Balkan allies, led by Bulgaria, destroyed Turkey with a few well-aimed blows. The young Balkan states destroyed the *status quo* in the Balkans, over which European diplomacy had stood guard with such zeal for decades. While the Great Powers held a disintegrating Turkey together because they could not agree over the division of its legacy, the Balkan states expelled Turkey by force of arms from its European vilayets, even up to the walls of Constantinople, and established a new situation in the Balkans.

The Great Powers were forced to reconcile themselves with this situation, firstly because it did not contradict the interests of a majority of them, and secondly because yet again they could not agree on changing it. As always in capitalist society, great contradictions are resolved by force, and this is also the case with those tied to the existence of European Turkey.

After their victory over Turkey, the Balkan states were placed in a very favourable international situation. The great capitalist powers could not decide whether to deprive the Balkan states forcibly of the gains they had made, firstly as an agreement was lacking between them regarding this, and secondly, because any state that tried to do so would run up against the outrage and indignation of the peoples of Europe. If in spite of this advantageous external situation, the Balkan League could not be turned into a healthy bulwark against the plans for conquest of European capitalism and imperialism, this is due to its internal weaknesses, for which the Balkan peoples have to thank above all their ruling classes and dynasties. But the greatest responsibility for the collapse of the Balkan League and for the second war, a new calamity visited on the Balkan peoples, belongs to the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and Bulgarian monarchism.

The great capitalist states left the Balkan allies to overthrow Turkey, but they exploited the first sign of weakness and internal discord of the allies in order to

impose their will with regard to the final liquidation of the Turkish legacy in Europe.

Russia, under whose supreme patronage the Balkan League had been established, was never happy with the march to war against Turkey. As is already known today and as P Milyukov²⁷ confirmed in the Russian Duma (and there was no official denial in response), Russia counted on a Turkish victory and prepared itself once more to enter into the rôle of the 'saviour' and 'liberator' of the Bulgarian people. In general, the European governments considered the campaign of the Balkan states to be an adventure that was condemned to failure, and that would give them the pretext for even more unscrupulous interference in the life of the Balkan peoples.

Taken aback by the rapid, thunderous victories of the Balkan League, and made especially uneasy by the expansion and strengthening of Bulgaria, Russia began to offer its 'advice' and 'suggestions' before the Bulgarian army had even reached the Çatalca line.²⁸ Russia could not tolerate the entry of the Bulgarian Emperor into Constantinople, the centuries-old dream of the Russian Tsars. After the Bulgarian army was stopped before the Çatalca fortifications and peace talks started with Turkey, Russia already set in motion all the means at its disposal once more to turn the Balkan League — which, encouraged and strengthened by its victories, could have turned against Russia itself — into its obedient tool. In order to attain this goal, Russia directed all of its efforts to scupper the creation of a large, powerful 'Greater Bulgaria' by expanding and strengthening Serbia at its expense.

In realising this goal, Russia diplomacy found its best mouthpieces and helpers in the person of the bourgeois parties in Bulgaria, and especially the governing Russophile-conservative coalition. In order to remove even the smallest possibility of any kind of independent activity whatsoever on the part of Bulgaria, the Russian government placed at the head of Bulgarian 'diplomacy' Dr Stojan Danev,²⁹ an old, experienced Russian tool, whose entire 'abilities' in the field of diplomacy were exhausted by — obeying and fulfilling unquestioningly the orders of Russia.

Having completely taken the talks being conducted by Bulgaria into its hands as well as Bulgaria's entire foreign policy, Russian diplomacy began to intrigue and scheme with zeal. First of all, it strove to string out the peace talks to gain more time. Then it encouraged the pretensions of Romania in order to make Bulgaria more compliant. And all the time it was pushing Turkey to hold on to as much territory as possible in Thrace in order to distance Bulgaria from Constantinople and preserve the latter for the Russian Tsars.

27. Pavel Milyukov (1859-1943) was a Russian constitutional politician who later served as foreign minister in the first Provisional Government of Prince Lvov in 1917, and a distinguished liberal historian.

28. The Çatalca line in Thrace was comprised of antiquated fortifications 20 miles west of Constantinople where the Bulgarians were defeated by the Ottomans in the First Balkan War.

29. Stojan Danev (1858-1949) was a Russophile politician who was Bulgarian Prime Minister during the Second Balkan War.

When Bulgaria stormed Adrianople and transferred its artillery to Çatalca, the Russian government suggested to Bulgaria that it desist from forcing the Çatalca fortifications, in exchange for which Russia promised to force Serbia to concede the whole 'uncontested zone' in Macedonia.³⁰ Two months later the Russian government informed Bulgaria of its desire to exercise 'its broadest rights to arbitrate over all Serbian-Bulgarian disagreements', that is, to fulfil the greater part of the Serbian demands. When Bulgaria sought to keep Rodosto,³¹ the Russian government categorically opposed this, while promising Bulgaria more land in Macedonia and more ports on the Aegean. But at the same time, the Russian government whispered to Serbia that it should be intransigent, and gave it time to consolidate itself and prepare to oppose Bulgaria. When Turkey was already prepared to yield and conclude peace, the Russian government encouraged Romania to come out with its pretensions to compensation, and in this way encouraged Turkey to haggle. At this time, the Russian government sent Danev to Bucharest to ask what the wishes of the Romanian rulers were, and later compelled him to sign a protocol in London that predetermined the surrender of Silistra, and finally organised the Petersburg Conference which gave Silistra to Romania.³² In this way, Russia managed to strike a blow at Bulgaria, encourage Turkish intransigence, and turn Romania towards its policy in the Balkans.

All this was accomplished with the submission and close collaboration of the Bulgarian rulers. The latter welcomed the public slap in the face Bulgaria had received as one would the caresses of a lover and being spat on as one would heavenly dew.

The right to arbitrate, which Serbia and Bulgaria had already conceded in their treaty of alliance to the Russian Tsar, gave Russia the possibility of interfering at the most decisive moment in the relations between the allies, namely when they undertook the division of the spoils of war. Russia exploited this right to encourage Serbian pretensions to Macedonia, so that in this way Russia not only reduced Bulgaria in size, but turned Serbia into an even weaker tool of Russia's policy of conquest in the Balkans and an even greater barrier to Austria-Hungary, Russia's historic competitor in the Balkans.

While Russia strove to preserve the Balkan League so as to turn it as far as possible into its obedient instrument, Austria-Hungary turned all of its efforts to destroying this league, which was also directed against it. Austria-Hungary pushed Serbia and Bulgaria towards war, long wishing to frustrate their alliance.

Austria-Hungary also encouraged Romania in its criminal attack on Bulgaria.

30. The uncontested zone refers to that part of Macedonia which Serbia was to receive under the terms of its secret prewar agreement with Bulgaria.

31. Today Tekirdağ (then as now in Turkey) on the coast of the Sea of Marmara, which lies between the Bosphorus Straits leading to the Black Sea and the Dardanelles to the Aegean.

32. The St Petersburg Conference of March 1913 met for Russia to resolve the territorial dispute between Bulgaria and Romania. Russia awarded the ethnically Bulgarian Danubian port of Silistra (today in Bulgaria) to Romania. This angered the Bulgarians, but did not satisfy the Romanians, who also wanted the southern Dobruja in north-eastern Bulgaria.

Just as Austria-Hungary pushed Serbia towards the south, towards Macedonia, in order to turn the gaze of the Serbs from the Austrian provinces populated by Serbs, so, in order to turn the gaze of the Romanians from Transylvania and Bukovina, where more than three million Romanians live, Austria-Hungary pushed Romania towards the conquest of Bulgarian territories. And before the second war, the Austro-Hungarian government 'sincerely' advised Bulgaria to satisfy the Tutrakan-Balchik border³³ demarcation demanded by Romania. In this way, Austria-Hungary wanted to satisfy Romania, but of course at the expense of Bulgaria, to wrench it from the influence of Russia and once again to win its sympathies.

Turkey's terrible wounds from the first war were still gaping when the Balkan allies, its conquerors, seized each other by the throat. Bulgaria, Turkey's dangerous enemy, itself cleared the path to the latter's invasion by completely withdrawing its army from Turkey's borders. And here Russia zealously assured the Bulgarian government that it would not allow Turkey to destroy the Peace of London. But as soon as the last regiment of Bulgarian soldiers abandoned their positions at Çatalca, Russia pushed Turkey into the conquest of Thrace. With this Russia completed the defeat of Bulgaria and established a pretext for itself to demand a little while later the right to drive out the Turks from Thrace and once again save Bulgaria, in exchange, of course, for some kind of compensation (the occupation of Armenia or Burgas and Midyé).³⁴ Bulgaria collapsed to defeat and ruin even faster than it had climbed to the heights of victory, before it had come to its senses and realised what was happening to it. Bulgaria was broken under the blows of its fifth enemy. The invasion of the Turkish army into Thrace completed the iron embrace that encircled Bulgaria from all sides, and which in a few weeks forced it into the most difficult and humiliating capitulation. Bulgaria was defeated. However, the defeat of Bulgaria was also the defeat of the dynastic and nationalist policy of conquest of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.



Before the outbreak of the war amongst the allies, Serbian and Bulgarian Social Democracy raised their voices against the butchery that was being prepared for these sister nations, while Romanian Social Democracy, despite the unbridled chauvinist rage and police vandalism with which the rulers of Romania sought to stifle its protest, organised massive meetings against the criminal attack of Boyar³⁵ and capitalist Romania. Thus did the Balkan proletariat boldly and energetically attack the criminal war with one single voice. It protested right in the face of the propertied classes and dynasties of the Balkans against their policy of mass murder and mutual ruination that led to the conquest and oppression of

33. Romania claimed southern Dobrudja from Bulgaria, specifically territory north of a line between the Danubian city of Tutrakan and the Black Sea port of Balchik, both today in Bulgaria. Located between the bend in the River Danube and the Black Sea, the Dobrudja was very fertile land.

34. Burgas and Midyé (now Kiyiköy), Bulgarian and Turkish ports respectively on the Black Sea.

35. The Romanian nobility.

the Balkan peoples. It raised high the banner of the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all the Balkan countries.

After the wars, the struggle for the Balkan federal republic was taken up with even greater energy by the proletariat in the Balkan countries. The Balkan proletariat, which was blooded in the butchery of the Balkan nations organised by their despots and exploiters, already understood that to fight for the Balkan federal republic meant fighting to prevent a new Balkan war, one to which the ruling classes and dynasties were driving the Balkan states, and which would not only snatch away the lives of hundreds of thousands more workers and ordinary people, but could also bury the independence of the Balkan peoples.

However, the wars gave a powerful push, not only to the struggle of the Balkan proletariat for the Balkan republic. It brought about a profound, radical change in the consciousness of the broad popular masses, ensured their growing sympathy and support for the cause of the Balkan federal republic, and established the conditions for an ever-stronger democratic-republican revolutionary movement, led by Social Democracy, which under its intellectual and political leadership will eliminate all obstacles and realise the Balkan federal republic.

Dimitrije Tucović Serbia and Albania³⁶

IN Albania, Austria-Hungary and Italy are conducting a policy of aggression, that is a fact. Is Austria-Hungary, constructed entirely on the denial of national rights, or is Italy, today throttling another nation on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, really defending the *national* principle? In the age of imperialist policy, such slogans are as ill-suited to these two capitalist states as the Russian slogan of the 'liberation of the Christians' in Turkey once was to Tsarist Russia when it was the greatest oppressor of freedom at home and abroad. These political lies no longer fare so well, even among the Balkan peoples, who have learnt through experience that every alliance with one or other 'protector' has cost them heavily, the more so as they, in their boundless longing for liberation from the Turkish yoke, abandoned themselves with such devotion to their protectors. In Albania itself, all the elements working for the autonomy of their country are aware of this. One of the most influential men in Elbasan,³⁷ later chosen as governor of that town, did not hesitate to answer my questions absolutely clearly and openly: Austria-Hungary wants Skadar³⁸ to stay in Albania so

36. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavić.

37. A city in central Albania.

38. Also known as Scutari, and now Shkodër in Albania. This city was taken by Montenegrin and Serbian forces during the First Balkan War. At Austro-Hungarian insistence, however, the city

that it can continue to be the northernmost guard on watch against the penetration of Serbia and Montenegro into its sphere of influence, just as Italy is interceding in favour of southern Albania, so that no one else can establish himself on the other side of the Straits of Otranto." The unyielding support of Austria-Hungary and Italy for the autonomy of Albania is about saving the last foot of land with which to protect themselves from the danger of anyone else gaining access to the Adriatic Sea, and from which they can influence the flow of events in the Balkans. Furthermore, Austria-Hungary wants 'lebensfähige Albanen', 'an Albania capable of living' at the very moment that it sees before it the danger that Serbia may become capable of living. The aim of this policy is as clear as day. No matter what, they want a new pygmy in the Balkans incapable of living, so that another pygmy that has been striving to break its chains does not become capable of living. This is the old method of creating a weak state, the incapable of living, condemned to cling to the coat-tails of European diplomacy, regardless of whether this appears under the false label of 'national principles' or 'balance of power politics'.

But if the concern of Austria's rulers for the right of all the Balkan peoples to national self-determination is a terrible clowning around with the national principle, the pretensions of Serbia to the conquest of Albania are a crude violation, and a trampling underfoot of that same principle. By proclaiming this policy, the Serbian bourgeoisie has now for the first time removed from the face of the Serbian people the veil of an oppressed nation struggling for its liberation. As their former youthful ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood have disappeared, they have lost the capacity to respect the desire of nations for freedom. Our bourgeoisie bends under the pressure of its northern neighbours, clings tightly to the coat-tails of Russian diplomacy, and borrows the means by which it rules from foreign capitalist companies. It has acquired the ideology of an exploiter and a proprietor that sees itself at the head of a hungry army, and as the master of several million oppressed subjects; it dreams of greatness and bristles; it appeals only to force and throttles those weaker than itself at the same time that it too is threatened with the danger of being strangled by stronger forces. But as this turnaround in the policy of our bourgeoisie, which had to come sooner or later as the result of capitalist production, appeared before the Serbian people had achieved total national unification, so that Serbia's rulers have begun to use the political division and enslavement of their own nation to justify their appetites to enslave other nations, this is just proof that the capitalist economy of profit and the bourgeois military-bureaucratic state system give rise to the same appetites among the small as among the great representatives of today's social order at home and abroad, in domestic as well as in foreign policy.

This new course in the policy of the Serbian bourgeoisie has more than a

was evacuated, as it was essential for the survival of the Albanian state that the Habsburgs wanted to create to hold back Serbia from gaining access to the Adriatic

39. The Straits of Otranto lie between the heel of Italy and Albania.

theoretical significance for Social Democracy. Not only is it confirmation of our viewpoint *that the national ideals of the ruling classes are a lie behind which is hidden the desire to exploit their people at home and enslave nations abroad.* The national liberation and unification it seeks for its own nation the capitalist bourgeoisie denies to other nations. From its class viewpoint, this is natural and understandable: when my own people find themselves under my class rule, why do you 'savage' Albanians resist joining what is according to all the laws of the modern state an organised and ready-made system of submission! The foreign policy of ruling classes is but the continuation of their domestic policy. And just as the proletariat in a certain country represents the one social class which cannot struggle for freedom from class slavery without freeing the whole of society, so Social Democracy cannot advocate freedom for its own people without advocating national freedom for all other nations. In this lies one of the fundamental differences between the viewpoint of Social Democracy and the bourgeois parties on the national question.

But the great practical significance of this question has to interest us all the more because the consequences of the aggressive exertions of our rulers represent an inexhaustible source, not only of new atrocities against the Albanian population, but also of constant danger for the peace and tranquillity of our people, and of endless burdens and sacrifices. Serbia has been pushed into the maelstrom of the struggle of aggressive ambitions which has all manner of foreseeable and unforeseeable obstacles and currents, a maelstrom in which the energy of the people will be exhausted in futile efforts to seize the coast. New and even greater efforts will be made in order to overcome every new obstacle, and the sacrifices which the masses are finding all the heavier to bear will be justified by those that have already been made. The conquering invasion of Albania has given birth to the bitterness of the Albanian people towards Serbia and to revolts, and revolts impose new financial and military pressures; insecurity on the western border of Serbia has appeared as the consequence of the aggressive policy towards the Albanian people, and is the reason for the army's constant state of readiness; for the same reason we have come into conflict with stronger pretenders to Albania, and in the delirium of creating a great Adriatic state by subjugating other nations, our rulers preach some great future settling of accounts with them. Having mortgaged the country, new state burdens, militarism and other parasitic institutions are seeking from the people still greater sacrifices, the more they are being strangled materially and exhausted economically by perpetual insecurity, by the danger of war and by frequent mobilisations.

That is how the rush of events will finally, by force of the internal logic of things, push our exhausted little country from crisis to crisis, from danger to danger, while all the bourgeois organs of public opinion will try to ensure that the true cause of these misfortunes is forgotten and that the responsibility for them is transferred to others. For this reason, Social Democracy, as the one resolute opponent of the aggressive policy which is the cause of all these misfortunes, cannot allow the moment to pass unrecorded when our ruling class made a grab for other countries and for the freedoms of others, when the for-

mer heralds of national liberation took up the banner of national oppression, and when the interests of capital swallowed up the interests of the nation. We must constantly point to the indissoluble causal link between the aggressive policy of the bourgeoisie and the heavy consequences and losses whose end is nowhere in sight.



The Balkan Peninsula is a mixture of nations with intertwined historical memories. Some parts of the peninsula, which in these historical memories represent self-contained regions, have been entangled with one another and lie across each other's natural paths of cultural and trading links with the world. This is particularly true of its central regions, Old Serbia and Macedonia, the regions that make up the main part of the Turkish inheritance of the Balkan statelets. Thus, when by the efforts of the masses Turkish rule was pushed out of these regions, the ruling circles of the Balkan statelets stepped forward with their fists full of plans for the division of the newly-won regions on the basis of historical and national rights and of economic and political necessities. But here lies the problem: that division was not possible without trampling on the national principle, without endangering the state's existence and damaging real economic interests as well as imagined and outlived historical rights. For example, as the natural entry point to the Balkans, Salonika is needed by everyone, but Salonika is one and indivisible. The trading and transport axis of the Balkans, without which Salonika would not be what it is, is undoubtedly the Vardar valley,⁴⁰ and it too is one and indivisible. In this same way, the borders of the medieval kingdoms often moved and overlapped, and as a result the historical pretensions of the Balkan statelets are also in irreconcilable antagonism. Who is then able to establish at all where the borders of the Serbian and Bulgarian nations start and finish? How is it possible to gather the Macedonian Slavs into one national community without oppressing the Greeks and other nations? How is it possible to gather the Greeks of Thrace into one national state without oppressing the Turks, and without cutting Bulgaria's links with the Bulgarians around Salonika and further on to Kostur?⁴¹

These are just a few indications of the great number of real and imagined questions and true and false interests, which have, with the destruction of Turkish power, poured out like water from a broken pot, and which could only have been satisfactorily resolved *by the creation of a new union*. Opened up by the destruction of one whole, these questions could have been peacefully and satisfactorily resolved only within a *new whole of a higher form*. This was, incontestably, the only road which would have led not to war, but rather to rapprochement, freedom, strength and general progress in the Balkans, not to mention the great significance of avoiding fratricidal war. In general, a union of nations in the Balkans is the solution to the complex Balkan Question from which all the Balkan peoples would gain the most favourable conditions for peaceful and successful

40. Roughly the area of modern Macedonia through which the River Vardar runs.

41. Now Kastoria in northern Greece near the border with Albania.

development in the future. Only the creation of a new union in place of the Turkish rule that was overthrown could have protected long-lost national freedoms from once again being drowned in a bloody internecine tug-of-war over the newly-won territories, which is the greatest misfortune for the freedom of the Balkan peoples. With the thieving plunder of the newly-conquered territories, this freedom was throttled before it was born, which gives historical confirmation to the viewpoint of Social Democracy that *the national liberation of the Balkan nations is not possible without the unification of the whole Balkans into one general union*. Such a union of peoples would, at the same time, liberate all the nations and regions of the Balkan Peninsula from the mutual crowding and obstruction which numerous frontiers tend to create, and would open free access to the sea for all. The Balkans would become *one* vast economic territory in which modern economic life would receive a boost, and each part of the region would be guaranteed freedom of movement and fulfilment of its economic needs, as well as the means for more rapid economic development in general. *The true economic emancipation of the Balkan nations lies in the economic union of the Balkans*. And with the unification of political forces and economic progress, the Balkan peoples would be able to resist the aggressive pretensions of the European capitalist states.

If there is a political reality in the Balkans, it is the necessity for a union of the Balkan nations. Belief in that necessity springs from observing the real situation in the Balkan Peninsula, like reading any open book that precisely outlines our future. *The only realistic policy of the Balkan states is one that takes this idea as its guiding principle*.

As an act in the great Balkan drama which is closely linked to preceding and subsequent developments, Serbia's campaign of aggression in Albania is the crudest deviation from the principle of the union of the Balkan nations, and a deviation paid for with the most striking defeat. In addition to that tangled web of historical, ethnographic and political relations which envelops disputes in Macedonia, the reasons behind such an act express most clearly the tendencies of the Balkan policy of the bourgeoisie. This act nakedly exposes the intolerance of the ruling classes towards other nations, and the aggressive ambitions and the readiness of the bourgeoisie to carry them out with the most brutal crimes, such as have until now only been committed in overseas colonies. The abandonment of the principle of the union of Balkan nations, even when agreement was reached on common action against Turkey, has driven us to batter and crush one another in vain in the ravines of Albania. And driven out of there, we were thrown into a mad and barbaric slaughter with our brothers at Bregalnica.⁴² One error attracted another, and one defeat led to another. That is how the 'realistic' policy of Mr Pašić⁴³ has been sealed with two very real defeats: in Albania and at Bregalnica. And while there is the desire to justify the Albanian adventure by the

42. The Battle of Bregalnica was fought during the Second Balkan War of 1913 when Serbia and Greece defeated Bulgaria and gained the lion's share of Ottoman Macedonia.

43. Nikola Pašić (1845-1926) was Prime Minister several times and the leading Serbian statesman of his day.

fact that we have been cut off from Salonika, and the crime of Bregalnica by the fact that we were driven out of Albania, then we have to emphasise *that the cause of both evils is one and the same, namely, the aggressive ambitions of the bourgeoisie and the ruling cliques and leaders in the Balkans and their inability to replace their limited separatist interests with the principle of union which many of their representatives once used to advocate.*

Serbia's aggressive approach towards the Albanian people in particular has provided yet more experience of the great danger which every conflict between the Balkan nations represents for one side and the other. At the same time, it has also shown how the policy of the ruling classes creates hatred between nations.

Today it has become very risky to advocate the need for collaboration with the Albanians. In a dangerous contest to justify a wrong policy, the bourgeois press has created a whole pack of untrue and tendentious ideas about the Albanians, while Serbia's policy of conquest, with its barbaric methods, was bound to fill the Albanians with the deepest hatred for us. Yet there has never been such hatred before. The Serbian and Albanian tribes, as can be seen from the accounts of Marko Miljanov,⁴⁴ lived in close contact with each other under Turkey. They were linked by very great social kinship, expressed by many common customs, traditions and memories, such as many joint actions against the Turkish authorities; frequently blood kinship also existed. According to what Miljanov noted among the people, the Kuči, Belopavlijići, Hoti, Piperi and Klimentići had not always represented two tribal groups, the Albanian and the Montenegrin, divided into two hostile camps, but had often stood on the same side against the invading enemy. As proof that memories of those close relations lived on among the Albanian people, there is an Albanian saying Dositej Obradović recorded during his travels in Albania: 'We were once one clan and tribe with the Serbs.'⁴⁵

Many factors and events have since led to a situation where, in place of neighbourly relations and feelings of kinship, intolerance and enmity are beginning to spread. What contributed most to this development was the systematic implementation of Constantinople's policy of divide and rule, and the behaviour of Serbia and Montenegro towards the Albanian population during the wars with Turkey.

If anyone had the right conditions to work in agreement with the Albanians, Montenegro and Serbia did. Not only did they have mixed populations and the kinship of neighbouring tribes, but also their mutual interests pointed these two nations to agreement and friendly relations. Just as the road to the Adriatic Sea runs across modest Albanian settlements, Albanian ties with the interior of the peninsula lead across Serbian borders. Just as we need the sea, they need land

44. Marko Miljanov Popović (1833-1901) was a Montenegrin political and military leader who learned to read and write in his 50s, producing works on the common tribal life and customs of the Albanians and the Montenegrins.

45. Dositej Obradović (1739-1811), one of Serbia's greatest literary figures, travelled widely and was much influenced by the Enlightenment, and was briefly Minister of Education during the Serbian Revolution of 1804-13. Tucović here quotes from his classic from 1783, *Život i priključanja* [*Life and Adventures*] (Belgrade, 1997 edition), p133.

even more. If our worries over our exports point us towards the Albanians, their worries over bread point them towards us. If these two sides cannot agree, they will crowd out and throttle one another.

But all hopes of a policy of agreement and friendship were dashed on this occasion much more by one overbearing act of conquest by Serbia than by the crudeness of the Albanian tribes. Serbia did not enter Albania as a *brother*, but as a *conqueror*. Moreover, it did not enter as a *politician* either, but as a *brutal soldier*. Behind the brutality of military practice, the politician could not be seen. In fact, he had only one thought which was contained in the order: 'Go and conquer!' Subjugate or perish! Given a policy that did not cater for *human beings*, for *tribes*, for *the people*, and given the natural desire of Albania to gain its independence, Serbia lost every contact with the representatives of the Albanian people, and pushed them into a terrible hatred for all things Serbian. If the Albanian people have not until now represented one national whole which could take an interest in and give life to one idea, that common idea is today, regrettably, the general *national* revolt of the Albanian population against the barbaric behaviour of their neighbours, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, a revolt that is a great step forward in the national awakening of the Albanians.

Relying exclusively on the army, which has no understanding of these questions, the Serbian government, delirious with cravings for conquest and deluded by foreign influence, did not even know how to exploit its half-year rule in northern Albania with a single act which would have left some trace and soothed wounds. It did not know how to do this, even at the final moment when the question of Albanian autonomy had already matured. The masses yearned for liberation from the poverty of the peasant condition, but for such *revolutionary* acts only Napoleon's revolutionary army had any understanding. The more educated layers among the Albanians did not hide their uncompromising attachment to the idea of autonomy from Serbia, but what every English Conservative would know how to assess *politically* was too much by far for the Serbian Radicals.⁴⁶ They pushed on towards the sea by force. Serbia entered Albania as an enemy, and it left as an enemy.

The boundless hostility of the Albanian people towards Serbia is the first concrete result of the Albanian policy of the Serbian government. The second, still more dangerous, result is the consolidation in Albania of two of the Great Powers who have the greatest interest in the Balkans. This represents yet more proof that every internecine animosity between the Balkan peoples only benefits their common enemy. The aggressive attitude of Serbia, Greece and Montenegro could not prevent the creation of the autonomy of Albania, but this pushed the youngest pygmy in the Balkans, even prior to its appearance before the world, to deliver itself up to the mercies of Austria-Hungary and Italy. This fact is of great danger for peace and for the free development of Serbia. It is clear that this danger does not come in any way from the fact that an autonomous

46. The Radical Party, led by Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić, was then the dominant party of the Serbian ruling class

Albania was created, but rather that it was created in the struggle against the aggressive desires of the neighbouring Balkan statelets, that it was in fact taken from them by the intervention of Austria-Hungary and Italy, and that it has in this way been tied so strongly to these two states. Where friendship was needed, both sides have been overcome by terrible hostility, while friendly contacts are being consolidated between two parties, one of whom is already condemned to be the other's victim.

The two concrete results of the aggressive policy of Serbia towards the Albanian people have both been felt by the state's finances and our economic development, but mostly by those tens of thousands of slaves who are perishing in the Albanian mountains. They have been despatched to the border to stop with their lives the wave of bitterness which has been provoked by the policy of aggression of our rulers, and to guard the country from the danger into which on this occasion it has been drawn. The chains with which the bourgeoisie wished to shackle other nations have cramped the freedom of its own country and its own people.

Finally, while there is a desire to justify the campaign of aggression in Albania with false theories about the incapacity of the Albanians for national development. The very real and, regretfully, evil consequences of that campaign have exposed to the whole nation the incapacity of the ruling classes to conduct a policy which is in the national interest. What results will flow from the struggle for autonomy in Albania is a separate question to which only the future can provide an accurate reply, but the comprehensive and costly defeat of the policy of aggression of our bourgeoisie which fought against autonomy stands before us as an accomplished fact and rings out with fine historical irony over the theory of the national 'incapacity' of the Albanians. But since the defeat of the policy of aggression has not brought to an end the string of dangers and sacrifices that threaten the freedom of the Serbian people and the future of Serbia, it is at the very least now necessary to look truth in the face and, setting aside all prejudices, recognise that *the struggle that the Albanian people are today conducting is a natural, inevitable historical struggle for a different political life from the one they had under Turkey, and different from the one imposed on them by their ruthless neighbours, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro.* A free Serbian people must value and respect that struggle as much for the freedoms of the Albanians as for their own, and deny every government the means to carry out a policy of aggression.

As the representative of the proletariat which has never been the lackey of the aggressive policy of the ruling classes, Social Democracy is duty bound to track step by step our rulers' policy of extermination towards the Albanians, to stigmatise as barbaric a policy carried out on the false pretext of a 'higher culture' as the class policy of the bourgeoisie which greatly damages the class interests of the proletariat, and as an anti-national policy of aggression which brings the peace and freedom of the country into danger and which greatly worsens the position of the masses. Against this policy, Social Democracy raises its own slogan: *the political and economic union of all the peoples of the Balkans, including the Albanians, on the basis of full democracy and the fullest equality.*

VIII: The First World War and the Balkan Federation

Introduction

ON 28 June 1914, in Sarajevo, the 19-year-old Bosnian Serb nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne.¹ The assassination was seized upon by Vienna as a golden opportunity to provoke a decisive confrontation with Serbia, for too long a destabilising thorn in the side of the Habsburg Empire. On 23 July, the Serbian government was presented with a note of ultimatum which, in Trotsky's words, 'for sheer audacity, has scarcely ever been paralleled in diplomatic history'.² Demanding a reply within 48 hours, it laid down 10 conditions which were patently designed to ensure rejection as the pretext for war.³

On the morning of 25 July, with the deadline for the Serbian government's reply set to expire later in the day, the Central Committee of the Serbian Social Democratic Party met and adopted an uncompromisingly defiant anti-war stand. The need for vigorous opposition beyond the confines of parliament and the press was also recognised. Dimitrije Tucović, the party leader, argued, 'we have

1. The assassination was the work of a secret organisation of army officers called the Black Hand, allied with young Bosnian nationalists. But the Serbian government was not behind it, as the Habsburgs well knew. See Tim Judah, *The Serbs* (New Haven and London, 1997), p97. Ironically, Dimitrije Tucović's brother, Vladimir, a Colonel, was a Black Hand member.
2. Leon Trotsky, *War and the International* (1914), Wellawatte, 1971, p4. The Habsburgs demanded that the Serbs suppress anti-Austrian newspapers and dismiss anti-Austrian teachers and army officers. 'Sheer audacity' of a comparable kind was also displayed by the United States as it prepared to go to war against Serbia in 1999. Equally determined to manufacture conflict, its demands at the Rambouillet negotiations, amounting to the virtual occupation of the country by Nato, were also designed to be rejected by the Serbian government.
3. As the wife of the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Leopold von Berchtold (1863-1942), later explained, 'poor Leopold could not sleep on the day when he wrote the ultimatum to the Serbs, as he was so worried that they might accept it. Several times during the night he got up and altered or added some clause, to reduce this risk.' (John W Mason, *The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1867-1918*, London, 1985, p64)

to hold meetings where we can state our anti-war position and our demand for peace at all costs. Our local organisation must therefore call a meeting in Belgrade for this evening.⁴ Placards condemning the war and announcing a meeting at 7.30pm that evening were printed, inviting workers to the National Hall 'where you will hear expressed the socialist position and proletarian international solidarity'.⁵

That afternoon, however, the Serbian government issued an order for full and immediate mobilisation, and Tucović, who was called up along with many party members, was forced to cancel the meeting. Although the Serbian government had made a number of 'extraordinary concessions' in its reply to Austria's ultimatum by agreeing to nine out of the 10 demands, it refused to allow the participation on Serbian soil of Habsburg magistrates and policemen in the assassination inquiry. As the government well knew, this refusal made war inevitable.

Three days later, on 28 July, Austria-Hungary formally declared war on Serbia, and the first shell of the First World War fell on Belgrade the following day. By then, the Serbian government had withdrawn south to the town of Niš. There, at a session of the Serbian parliament held on 31 July, with the country in a state of unimaginable national hysteria and foreboding, Dragiša Lapčević, one of the only two socialist deputies, made the party's first public declaration against the war. His uncompromising and courageous speech is reproduced below as the first item in this section. Lapčević condemned the war, and predicted that it would bring devastation upon Serbia. He attacked the government for being a pawn of France and Russia, and declared that Austria-Hungary would not have dared attack had Serbia committed itself to forging a Balkan federation. His words caused a furore. The Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, was so enraged by it that he 'immediately uttered a provocative speech, in which he characterised our party as dregs of troublemakers and traitors. There was then a stormy scene which fell little short of becoming a brawl'.⁶

Events elsewhere moved on apace. On 30 July, the Tsar ordered immediate mobilisation. On 1 August, Germany declared war on Russia and, two days later, on France. Then, on 4 August, came the death blow for the Second International. In Germany, the Social Democratic Party's Reichstag deputies voted unanimously for war credits, while in France, the *Union Sacrée* was declared, in which all parties, including the socialists, declared their support for war. The following day, the Austrian party's *Arbeiter-Zeitung* hailed the Reichstag vote, with its editor, Friedrich Austerlitz, declaring that 4 August had been 'a day of the proudest and most powerful exaltation of the German spirit'.⁸ On 6 August,

4. Dimitrije Tucović, *Sabrana Dela* [Collected Works] (Belgrade, 1980), Volume 8, p335.

5. *Ibid*, pp336-7.

6. Trotsky, *War and the International*, op cit, p4.

7. Dušan Popović, 'Srpska socijalna demokracija za vreme rata' [Serbian Social Democracy During the War], *Sabrana Dela* [Collected Works] (Belgrade, 1986), Volume 4, p39.

8. SF Kassin, *War and the Marxists: Socialist Theory and Practice in Capitalist Wars* (Bouklier, 1989), p178. Friedrich Austerlitz (1862-1931) was editor of *Arbeiter-Zeitung* during 1895-1931. Aus-

Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia. The Serbian socialists now found themselves under the most colossal pressure. Externally, the International was collapsing around them like a house of cards, with one major party after another succumbing to national chauvinism and support for its own ruling class. Internally, the might of the Austro-Hungarian imperial army was bearing down upon diminutive Serbia with its rag-bag peasant soldiers, an impending conflict the Serbian people overwhelmingly saw as the righteous continuation of their long and bitter struggle for national liberation.

The scene was thus set for the vote on war credits in the Serbian Parliament, the Skupština, on 8 August. None other than Leon Trotsky has left us with this dramatic description of the scene he witnessed:

The writer was in Serbia at the beginning of the war. In the Skupština, in an atmosphere of indescribable national enthusiasm, a vote was taken on the war credits. The voting was by roll-call. Two hundred members had answered 'Yes'. Then in a moment of deathlike silence came the voice of the Socialist Lapčević — 'No.' Everyone felt the moral force of this protest, and the scene has remained indelibly impressed upon my memory.⁹

The Serbian social democrats did not resist mobilisation. Instead, they argued that the party had to share the people's suffering. In a letter to his father of 4 August sent from his unit encamped south of Belgrade, Tucović wrote:

Our generation is destined to break its neck on great events. We shall see how this will end. As far as I'm concerned, you know me, I shall go about things slowly and surely; but just as I have never done so in the past, I shall not now hide from the destiny that is pursuing the whole nation.¹⁰

On 20 November 1914, Tucović was killed in action during the Battle of Kolubara.¹¹

trian's parliament had been suspended in March 1914, and the Austrian party thus did not vote for war credits. GDH Cole wrote of their capitulation: 'Undoubtedly, the two main influences that acted upon them... were, first, hatred of Russian autocracy and, secondly, the keen sense of German unity which pervaded the predominant section of the Austrian party.' (*A History of Socialist Thought: Volume III, Part II — The Second International 1889-1914*, London, 1956, p544)

9. Trotsky, *War and the International*, op cit, p4. I have here modernised the spelling of Serbian names. None of Trotsky's major biographers mention his presence at this vote. Titost historiography mythologised the Serbian party's voting record against war credits. One Serbian historian claimed that the two socialist deputies voted against six times, but only four such votes were held! Moreover, the other socialist deputy, Trila Kaclerović, although opposed to the war, was not present at the vote on 8 August. Lapčević again voted against in August 1915, this time with Kaclerović, and a non-socialist deputy. Neither socialist was present when the other two votes were taken. See Dubravka Stojanović, *Ishkavanje načela: Srpska socijaldemokratska partija i ratni ciljevi Srbije 1912-1918* [*Principles on Trial: The Serbian Social Democratic Party and the War Aims of Serbia 1912-1918*] (Belgrade, 1994).
10. Tucović, *Sabrana Dila*, Volume 8, op cit, p339.
11. Trotsky later paid him this fulsome tribute: 'I remember above all the image of our friend,

Tucović's death was unquestionably a great tragedy for the Serbian socialists. Not only had the party lost its most talented leader, but the war devastated the country and left little space for political activity. Despite this, the party's leaders remained defiant. The second item in this section, a letter to Christian Rakovsky from Dušan Popović on conditions in Serbia, which appeared in Trotsky's anti-war Paris newspaper, *Nash Slovo*, captures the emotional impact of Tucović's death, as well as the near-impossible conditions under which the party had to work in war-torn and typhus-ridden Serbia. Above all, however, the letter is important for its clear statement of how the Serbian party justified its internationalist stance in 1914. Despite the intense national significance of a war that pitted a large imperialist state against a small peasant country, Popović lucidly explains how the party saw the Serbo-Austrian war as an integral part of global imperialist conflict.

As such, Popović's letter reflects the thinking of the revolutionary left that opposed the First World War. Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1915:

If ever a state, according to formal considerations, had the right of national defence on its side, that state is Serbia. Deprived through Austrian annexations of its national unity, threatened by Austria in its very existence as a nation, forced by Austria into war, it is fighting, according to all human conceptions, for existence, for freedom, and for the civilisation of its people... But above all this we must not forget: behind Serbian nationalism lies Russian imperialism. Serbia itself is only a pawn in the great game of world politics. A judgement of the war in Serbia from a point of view that fails to take these great relations and the general world political background into account is necessarily without foundation.¹²

Or as Lenin put it: 'The national element in the Serbo-Austrian war is not, and cannot be, of any serious significance in the general European war.'¹³

By 1915, the situation in the Balkans was becoming ever more ominous, as conflict increasingly threatened to engulf the entire region. Although Serbia had repulsed two Austro-Hungarian offensives in 1914, a new force under German command was being assembled for a third and final offensive. Bulgaria was being intensively courted by both the Entente and the Central Powers, each hoping to entice it to their camp with the offer of the Macedonian territory Serbia had gained after the Balkan Wars. Greece, meanwhile, was split between pro-Ger-

Dimitrije Tucović. His loss is felt, I am sure, up until today in the Yugoslav and Balkan movement. He was one of the strongest figures. Unshakable, solid and full of assurance, Tucović had been created for that epoch of humanity. What a misfortune that he should die before entering onto the new road of our revolutionary epoch.' ('Letter to Yugoslav Comrades', *Bulletin Communiste*, 10 October 1920, translated in *What Next?*, no 6, 1998)

12. Rosa Luxemburg, 'The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in the German Social Democracy', *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York, 1970), p309.
13. VI Lenin, 'The Collapse of the Second International', *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1964), Volume 21, p235.

man neutralists led by the Crown, and pro-Allied interventionists around the liberal Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos.¹⁴ As for the Romanian ruling class, it patiently bided its time to see which way the precarious winds of war would blow.

The decision to hold a Second Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Bucharest in July 1915 was therefore a conscious attempt to solidify the anti-war Balkan socialists in preparation for the storm ahead. Besides the Romanians who hosted the conference, led by Christian Rakovsky and Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Dimităr Blagoev's Bulgarian Narrows attended, as did Aristotle D Sideris of the Workers' Federation of Salonika, who also represented the other main anti-war Greek socialist group of Panerges Dimitratos, the Socialist Union of Athens.¹⁵ The Serbs were unable to attend because of conditions in Serbia, but Dragisa Lapčević was elected the conference's honorary president.

Below we present two extracts from the conference's proceedings. The first is the 'Manifesto of the Socialist Parties of the Balkans' which had been agreed prior to the convening of the conference. The 'Manifesto', very likely written by Rakovsky, paints a sober picture of what lay in store for the Balkans as the imperialist powers sought increasingly to entice the Balkan ruling classes to their cause. The struggle of the working class and Social Democracy for a Balkan federal republic, it concludes, can be the only way forward.

The second is the discussion on the re-establishment of the Second International. None of the groups envisaged a new International, but the criticisms of Blagoev and Georgi Kirkov that the Second International had failed to impose discipline on its constituent national sections provide a foretaste of the thinking that would later guide the Bolsheviks when they established the Third International. Two months later, in September 1915, Rakovsky represented the Romanians and Vasil Kolarov¹⁶ the Bulgarians at the Zimmerwald Conference, where they both criticised the Second International, but, unlike Lenin, were not yet prepared to contemplate a break from it.

The principal practical outcome of the conference was the constitution of a

14. Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936) was the leading Greek statesman of his day. Originally from Crete, he led the Liberal Party and was Prime Minister several times before and after the First World War.

15. The Greek socialists were notoriously weak and disunited at this time. The Federation was then the major Greek socialist organisation, and called a conference in April 1915 (later grandly known as the First Panhellenic Socialist Conference) in order to unify the movement. Aristotle D Sideris was a lawyer from Corfu and MP for Salonika from 1915. He was later on the reformat wing of the Greek Socialist Workers Party (forerunner of the Communists). The Federation's main collaborator was Panerges Dimitratos and his Socialist Union of Athens. They were opposed by one of the first Greek socialists, Platon Drakoulas (1858-1933), who was sturdily pro-Entente, and by Nikos Yannos (1885-?) and his Socialist Centre of Athens, who was more critically supportive. See George B Leon, *The Greek Socialist Movement and the First World War: The Road to Unity* (New York, 1976).

16. Vasil Kolarov (1877-1950), the son of a shoemaker, studied law in Geneva. He was a leading Narrow and Central Committee member from 1905, Secretary-General of the Bulgarian Communist Party at its creation in 1919, and later a Comintern functionary and Stalinist. He was the President of Soviet-controlled Bulgaria in 1946-47.

Balkan Workers' Social Democratic Federation with its office in Bucharest, having at its head an Inter-Balkanic Bureau composed of two delegates from each country, one elected by the party and the other by the union organisations. The bureau was charged with publishing a Balkan Bulletin in French and German, producing propaganda pamphlets on the Balkan federation and ensuring compliance with its resolutions. The conference thus provided a skeletal structure for coordinating the activities of the various anti-war parties. However, as war and repression spread across the peninsula, the 'little International' of the Balkans was not to have another opportunity to meet.

Blagoev and the Bulgarian Narrow socialists were the first to be confronted with war when Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and participated in the final offensive against Serbia with German and Austro-Hungarian forces in October 1915. The Bulgarian Narrows opposed Bulgarian mobilisation in September, and their 11 deputies voted against war credits in December.¹⁷

In Romania, Rakovsky and Dobrogeanu-Gherea maintained a strong anti-war stand from the very beginning. In June 1916, when the party organised a strike over falling living standards and a demonstration to support neutrality, troops shot dead eight workers, wounding many others. In August, when Romania finally joined the Entente, the government dispersed a mass anti-war meeting, banned further gatherings, suppressed party publications, and arrested Central Committee members, including Rakovsky who was to languish in gaol until the Russian Revolution of February 1917.

In Greece, the Workers' Federation of Salonika also took an anti-war stand from the very beginning. In 1917, after Venizelos had forced the pro-German King Constantine from the throne and joined the Entente in July, the Federation's continued defiance resulted in the suspension of their paper *Avanti!* (*Forward!*).¹⁸ Likewise, Dimitratos opposed mobilisation and issued an anti-war manifesto in his group's *Ergatikos Agon* (*Workers Struggle*), for which he was imprisoned and his paper suspended.

17. Initially, Yanko Sakizov's reformist Broads were also opposed to war, but always abstained in the votes on war credits. After Bulgaria joined battle, however, a large section came out in support and accepted government posts. See Joseph Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria: Origins and Development 1883-1936* (New York, 1959), p70. Alexander Stamboliaki (1879-1923), the charismatic leader of the much larger radical Agrarians and Prime Minister after the war, was also anti-war, for which he was sentenced to death, later commuted to life imprisonment. His Agrarian Party however voted for war credits, which he unequivocally condemned from prison. See John D Bell, *Peasants in Power: Alexander Stamboliaki and the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, 1899-1923* (Princeton, 1977).
18. The Federation was based in the Ladino-speaking Jewish community of Salonika, hence the non-Greek title of its paper. As George B Leon notes of the membership: 'Being almost exclusively Jewish and only recently incorporated into Greece, they were free of the patriotic and nationalist attachments of their Greek comrades.' (*The Greek Socialist Movement*, op cit, p25) Nevertheless, there were problems with the Federation's anti-war stance. In 1915, for example, it entered into an electoral alliance with the pro-German, but neutralist Greek royalists, as a result of which two deputies, Sideris and Albert Couriel, were elected in Salonika. In August 1917, however, Sideris and Couriel gave Venizelos a vote of confidence, for which they were denounced by the Federation.

The defiant anti-war stand of the Balkan socialists of Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece remains an inspiration today. They refused to bow to the intense double pressure of foreign imperialism and domestic nationalism. At the heart of that refusal lay the vision of a Balkan federation, simultaneously a protective bulwark against imperialism and the bloody rivalries of the Balkan ruling classes. Without this idea as a guide, there can be no lasting revival in the fortunes of socialist internationalism across the Balkans today.

Dragan Plavčić

Dragiša Lapčević Against War

Speech in Serbian Parliament, 31 July 1914¹⁹

GENTLEMEN deputies! Ever since the day the Austro-Hungarian government sent our government that famous note through its representative, it has been quite clear that we find ourselves in a difficult situation.

We expected a calming reply from our government.

However, before the Serbian government's reply, Vienna's *Arbeiter-Zeitung* gave the best reply to Austria-Hungary's note.

Austria-Hungary's attitude towards Serbia is well enough known. For us it is extremely painful and extremely difficult.

However, no one has criticised and attacked this vile attitude towards Serbia and the Serbian people so well and so firmly as has Austrian Social Democracy. In Vienna's Reichsrat the esteemed deputy comrade Viktor Adler and in the delegations the equally esteemed deputy comrade Wilhelm Ellenbogen have, by attacking the policy of the Austro-Hungarian government, *always* defended at every opportunity and over many years the right of Serbia and the Serbian people to life. And today, gentlemen, Social Democracy in Austria-Hungary rises up as one man, not only against the policy of the Austro-Hungarian government towards our country, but also against the war which Austria-Hungary has declared against Serbia.²⁰

19. Translated from the Serbian by Dragan Plavčić.

20. Many good social democrats, among them the Marxist theoretician Pannekoek, found out, as I recently discovered, at the beginning of the war, that in fact Austro-Hungarian Social Democracy was the first, even before the Germans, who did not do their duty, and that *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the central organ of Austrian Social Democracy, attacked the Serbian government at the beginning of the war, playing the same game as their government. However, before the announcement of war, Austrian Social Democracy had a correct position. On their position during the war, see Jules Destrée, *Socialists and the European War*. [Lapčević's note] Both Adler (1852-1918) and Ellenbogen (1863-1951) later supported Austria-Hungary during the First

We Serbian social democrats acknowledge the proletariat in Austria-Hungary with pride and are here able to say that the proletariat and the Social Democracy of Austria-Hungary stand together with us on one and the same ground: that there must not be war between the people of Austria-Hungary and the people of Serbia. Social Democracy in Austria-Hungary maintains the position that the war must be stopped and peace concluded between the two countries so that healthy, normal, friendly relations can be established between the peoples.

We Serbian social democrats feel obliged to return this favour to the large and powerful Austro-Hungarian Social Democracy, and to the proletariat of all the nations of Austria-Hungary, by taking a stand on the same ground: that war between the two countries must be stopped as rapidly as possible and peace between them concluded as rapidly as possible, so that healthy, normal, friendly relations can be established between the peoples on both sides of the Sava and the Danube.

In fact, we do not want war, just as our Austro-Hungarian comrades do not want it.

And we do not want this war.

We do not want it — for the sake of the Serbian people; we do not want it — for the sake of the peoples of Austria-Hungary; we do not want it — for the sake of the peoples of Europe and the whole world; in fact, we do not want it — for the sake of the peace and tranquillity of the peoples of the whole globe.

We call for international conflicts to be resolved in a peaceful manner, by elected judges, and not with the blood and the slaughter to which entire thousands and millions of people are being driven.

Gentlemen! We do indeed find ourselves today in a war situation. War has begun. However, the government should have accounted earlier, much earlier for the human and material losses caused by war in 1912 and 1913.²¹ However, without accounting for them, we have been thrown into the waves of a new war, to suffer further losses.

We have been thrown into a war, but the government did not do all that was necessary to avert the threat of war. But as the war has already begun, it is the government's imperative duty to do everything, as rapidly as possible, to reach an honourable and honest peace and friendly relations between peoples.

We are obliged to do this not only for the peoples of Serbia and Austria-Hungary. We are also obliged to do this for the sake of peace in the Balkans, since this war may spread to the entire Balkan peninsula and set all these unhappy lands alight. We are also obliged to do this for the sake of peace in Europe because the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, which can be resolved in a peaceful manner, need not drag the whole world into bloody war so that history records this period as a most shameful one in which millions of lives were lost, in

World War Anton Pannekoek (1873-1960) was a Dutch Marxist and astronomer. He opposed Lenin from the left after the Russian Revolution, and became a theorist of Left Communism.

21. A reference to the First and Second Balkan Wars. See Section VII above.

which culture, created over hundreds of years, was ruined, and in which the lives, the material wealth and the civilisation of the whole world were destroyed!

Gentlemen! When I say this, I fear that the Serbian government is now being used as a plaything in the hands of certain Great Powers. And I find support for my fear, if not my belief in it, in passages from the Crown's Address, which says that this is not a Serbian conflict, but a conflict between the major interests of the Great Powers.

When the interests of the Great Powers are entangled, and when the Great Powers are in conflict, it is not the duty of small countries and small nations to serve as small change. It is the duty of small countries and small nations to defend themselves, because in such a general settling of accounts between the Great Powers small countries can only be the losers.

Gentlemen! The Great Powers have long conducted a colonial and imperialist policy.

This colonial and imperialist policy of theirs has driven them to maintain an infinitely costly militarism; their policy has driven them to shower their countries with debts; their policy drives them to tax every last thing, and to exhaust every last resource they can discover and grab hold of.

A mad thirst for colonies and conquests has driven them to a situation where guns must thunder between them. However, guns will thunder not for the sake of the small nations but against the small nations. The Triple Entente will not intercede on our behalf; nor will we receive any benefit from either one or other group of the Great Powers, because they will — both of them — embark upon international war for colonies and their own economic gains; and they regard the whole expanse from the Sava and the Danube to the Pacific Ocean as the object of their colonial policy. The Great Powers are quarrelling among themselves, and war between them will begin over the division of Asia Minor, over the Far East, over the Mediterranean Sea, over the Suez Canal, over the Pacific Ocean, and over the Dardanelles. And when it comes to liquidating the accounts they have settled by war, they will certainly compensate one another with the small countries and the small nations of the Balkans and Asia Minor.

Gentlemen! The European war that will be provoked will not only be terrible for all the European peoples, and a misfortune for civilisation nurtured over centuries, but such a European war will bring about the ruin of the Balkans as a direct result. And when the Balkans are ruined, then there can be no good for the Serbian people. Only in Balkan unity, in the happiness, the strength and the independence of the Balkans can the Serbian people also safeguard their own independence.

Gentlemen! That the situation has come to this, that Serbia has fallen into a position that it must endure a war with Austria-Hungary, this is the fault of the government, which has been conducting a pernicious policy.

It has taken the view that the Balkans must be divided, and at the moment it took the view that the Balkans must be divided, it adopted the standpoint which the Great Powers advocate: that the Balkans must be divided amongst them. It will be easy for them to divide the Balkans because the Balkan peoples have divided the region and quarrelled among themselves over it.

The second error the government made was that, on the basis of the division of the Balkans, it opened up the Balkan Question with war against Turkey, but did not succeed in solving and closing it by war.

The third error was that the conduct of such a policy brought about fratricidal war between Serbia and Bulgaria, between two tribes of one and the same people, who speak one and the same language, and who have one and the same interests.

The fourth error the government made was to conduct an aggressive policy of war against the Albanian people, with whom a healthy friendship and an alliance should have been consolidated.

The fifth error the government made was to conduct a policy of enslaving itself to Petrograd's diplomacy and the Paris Stock Exchange. But Petrograd's diplomacy and the Paris Stock Exchange have only the interests of Russian Tsarism and French finance capitalists in mind, and not under any circumstances Serbian interests.

Gentlemen! There is no salvation in such a policy.

The salvation of the Serbian people and all the peoples of the Balkans lies only in complete agreement in the Balkans, and in a strong federation of the Balkan peoples, a federation of Balkan republics.

Gentlemen, if today we had had a federation of the Balkan peoples, unity between Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Albania and Montenegro, it is more than certain that Austria-Hungary would not have declared war, just as it is more than certain that security in Serbia, in Bulgaria, in Romania, in Greece, in Albania and in Montenegro would be much more reliable and guaranteed. In this way, gentlemen, the international gendarmerie and the international commission would not have been able to spread out across Albania, Greece would not have been in fear of war because of the islands, Bulgaria would not have been worried about losing land, war would not have been declared against Serbia, nor would there have been any threat to Montenegro. Only complete unity between the Balkan peoples would have been a secure defence against Austria-Hungary, just as it would have been in the same way a secure defence against Russia.

Gentlemen! Serbia must change its policy. She must stop being an instrument of the Great Powers. She must agree to a *Balkan* policy which will bring about a Balkan federation.

In order to achieve this, she must immediately take steps to establish as rapidly as possible a customs union, a common transport system, a single monetary system, and a joint Balkan parliament. We must abolish the standing army and introduce a joint peoples' defence which will defend us from Russia as well as from Austria-Hungary, and from every campaign by the Great Powers.

Gentlemen! The government is called upon not to tolerate the provocations of chauvinist circles. All secret organisations that worsen our foreign relations and which represent a threat to domestic peace, must be put out of action. These secret organisations are unaccountable; no one else should conduct domestic and foreign policy except the responsible government which is based on parliament, and is accountable to parliament.

These organisations are dangerous for our foreign relations. However, they are also dangerous for our domestic relations and for peace at home. As was

confirmed a few months ago, they are also dangerous for parliamentary order at home.²² Such secret organisations cannot be tolerated.

Gentlemen! Because of all this, Social Democracy in Serbia calls on the government and all the bourgeois parties to secure peace for the sake of the people of Serbia.

In solidarity with the Social Democratic parties of the Balkans, it makes this call for the sake of the Balkan peoples.

As a Section of the Socialist International, it also makes this call in the interests of international peace, in the interests of the international proletariat, and in the interests of the peaceful cultural progress and development of all peoples.

Gentlemen, let there be an end to wars!

If society based on private property has become illogical, let us get rid of it, and let us not maintain it with human slaughter and seas of blood!

In place of the war that is developing, we call on the government to initiate a policy which will bring peace to Serbia and Austria-Hungary as soon as possible, to initiate a policy which will not have as a consequence misfortune for Serbia and the Balkans, and to initiate a policy which will avert a conflagration in Europe and the ruin of civilisation!

Dušan Popović
Serbian Social Democracy in
the War
Letter to Christian Rakovsky²³

I AM at Niš. Our paper *Radničke Novine* has been appearing from here since the beginning of the war. I have to edit it on my own because from the out-

22. 'Secret organisations' is a reference to the Black Hand, the conspiratorial band of fiercely nationalist Serbian army officers who were involved in plotting the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Earlier in May 1914, the Black Hand had played its part in opposing the Serbian government's decree proclaiming the priority of civil over military authority in the territories gained during the Balkan Wars. This decree almost toppled the government and threatened to provoke a military coup.

23. This letter, written in the spring of 1915, first appeared in Russian on 5 September 1915 on the front page of the Paris newspaper, *Nаше Слово*, edited by Leon Trotsky. A French version appeared 20 years later in Alfred Roemer *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre* (Paris, 1936), pp231-3. The Russian version contains additional material that does not appear in the French. It has not been possible to establish either the exact date of the letter, or whether it was originally written in Russian or French. This translation has been made from the French and checked against the Russian version in general as well as for additional material.

break of the war Lapčević has been at Skopje. We had published only a few issues of our paper after the declaration of war when the government banned it. But as soon as the panic of the first few weeks blew over, we resumed publication. Since October the paper has appeared regularly up to the present time.

You cannot imagine the conditions we are obliged to work under! But three great inspirations have maintained my efforts.

First of all, there is our highest socialist ideal, which summons us to struggle in a bitter and intransigent fashion against the universal barbarism of capitalist imperialism.

Then there was the death of my best friend, Tucović, which caused me even greater pain than the death of my beloved brother, who also fell on the battlefield. Tucović was my best fellow-worker, and the most active organising force of our movement. His death is an indescribable loss for our movement and an occasion of permanent mourning for me personally. But at the same time, his death gave a new enthusiasm for work and struggle; and when I have spent the day in this dark, solitary little room, when I go home in the evening, I feel some consolation at the thought that I have perhaps succeeded in advancing by another step the cause which alone will avenge the death of our unfortunate and great friend.

Finally, what encourages us to persevere is that our work is bearing fruit. *Radničke Novine* is read in all circles of society, and enjoys a serious influence. At present, during the slaughter, when almost all our comrades are either at the front or in their graves, *Radničke Novine* has achieved a circulation as high as it had at the best times before the war. A further proof is the fact that at present censorship exists almost exclusively because of *Radničke Novine*. It is the only opposition paper in Serbia, and almost every day the military authorities protest to the government about it.²⁴ This also shows that *we are making no concessions, absolutely none at all, to the generally accepted arguments and to the nationalist and belligerent tendencies.*

You will perhaps recall on this occasion those nuances that led me to disagree with the rest of the comrades at the time of the Balkan War.²⁵ On that matter I would say the following: even now I stand by my old thinking on this. In any case, I am more consistent by far than those European comrades who sought from us absolute rejection of that war, which represented in a certain sense a revolution for the Balkans (or which, ultimately, *could have become one*), but who for their part accepted this war, which is capitalist and imperialist *par excellence*.²⁶

But all this is now in the past. So far as this war is concerned, we are all, *with-*

24. After this letter was written, the Serbian government banned *Radničke Novine*. But it has been replaced by the daily paper *Budućnost* [The Future] (*Nashe Slovo* note).

25. Đulian Popović, the outstanding Serbian journalist and the author of this letter, putting forward the objective revolutionary moments of the First Balkan War by the allies against Turkey, thought it more appropriate to abstain in the vote against credits than to vote against, and generally for less active opposition to this policy. (*Nashe Slovo* note)

26. This paragraph appears only in the *Nashe Slovo* version.

out exception, in agreement since the first day of the war. On the very day when the mobilisation decree was issued, we convened our Central Committee, with our dear comrade Tucović, and at this meeting we clearly established our position on the basis of principles.

For us it was clear that, as far as the conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary was concerned, our country was obviously in a defensive position. Austria had been carrying on a policy of conquest against Serbia long before the latter became an independent state. As for the assassination at Sarajevo, the blame doubtless lies with the Serbian authorities. Hence, in formal terms, part of the responsibility for provoking the war falls on Serbia. But basically Serbia is defending its life and its independence, which Austria was constantly threatening even before the Sarajevo assassination. And if Social Democracy had a legitimate right to vote for war anywhere, then certainly that was the case in Serbia above all.

However, for us, the decisive fact was that *the war between Serbia and Austria was only a small part of a totality, merely the prologue to universal, European war, and this latter — we were profoundly convinced of this — could not fail to have a clearly pronounced imperialist character*. As a result, we — being a part of the great socialist, proletarian International — considered that it was our bounden duty to oppose the war resolutely. *We did not want to cause any discord in the attitude of the sections of the International*, and yet it is precisely through our position that we have, contrary to our intentions, caused such discord, for, alas!, almost all the other socialist parties have voted for this war!

It was a terrible moral blow for us, the hardest blow in our lives as militants. But despite everything, it has not made us waver in any way; it has not shaken our profound conviction that we have acted as socialists, and in the only way possible for socialists. The events which occurred later have merely reinforced our opinion about this war. And a few months later we learned with the greatest joy that a certain number of the very best socialists shared our opinion.

Unfortunately, we were only *too* right. This war has destroyed Serbia. It would be an understatement to say the country has been decimated: half, and the best half, of our population has been destroyed. To losses in combat must be added others, even greater, caused by typhoid fever and other epidemics which, as a result of our administrative chaos, bureaucratic negligence and corruption, have claimed innumerable victims. What was best and most valuable in Serbia no longer exists. 'Greater Serbia will have no Serbs': now this phrase has become a popular saying among us. The people are completely exhausted. And all of them long for peace. When three months ago, Lapčević gave a speech to the Skupština in which he called for peace and revived the socialist project of a Balkan federation, then the whole assembly remained in silence; not one of the political parties protested against this vigorous speech. It can be said that in these circumstances and at this moment, our party expressed not only the profound beliefs and burning desires of the great suffering masses, but even the aspirations of sections of the ruling bourgeoisie which had experienced the most terrible disillusion about its chauvinist policies.

Almost all the forces of our country, forces which were ripe not only for war but for revolution, have now been destroyed, and it seems that of all the parties it is ours which has suffered the heaviest losses. After the war our party will doubtless have the broad masses with it. But it will have no militants: all our brave comrades, who had a profoundly socialist culture, and who struggled for the cause with so much ardour and devotion, and with such success, are dead. All, with their comrade Tucović, are sleeping in their graves, and we shall not hear their voices again. As for those of us who remain living — we shall continue their struggle despite the incurable wound in our hearts.

My fraternal greetings

Yours

Dušan Popović

From the Editorial Board²⁷

To this letter, which speaks for itself, we can add only very little. With regard to resolving the questions of contemporary international politics, some of our comrades are troubled by the fate of Serbia and Belgium. But look at how the Serbian socialists resolve this question for themselves, without bowing the revolutionary banner before the Moloch of imperialism. It is clear to them, no less so than for the social-patriots of the Triple Entente, that Serbia is the object and not the subject of the bloody game of the international powers. But for them something else is also clear. They understand that the question of the fate of Serbia and Serbian socialism *must not be taken in isolation*. Considering it the duty of international socialism to take up an uncompromising position of struggle against the imperialism of all the warring great states, the Serbian socialists — precisely because they are internationalists — subordinate the local, limited characteristics of their position to the general logic of world imperialism and world socialism. But the patriots of the Triple Entente do precisely the opposite: [Four-and-a-half lines cut by the French censor].

'Learn from our heroic comrade Serbs!' — we would say to the government socialists of the Triple Entente, if we could for a moment imagine that this was a matter of logical and ideological disagreement, and not the conscious, and even more so, the malicious exploitation of the Belgian and Serbian questions for the national interests of the bourgeois states. 'Learn from the Serbs!' — we shall say to the Russian workers, among whom social-nationalists are trying to sow discord and ideological corruption — from the Serbs, learn courage and the capacity to reject nation-bound views in the name of the higher demands of international socialism!

27. This section appears only in the *Naše Slovo* version. Its style suggests that Trotsky wrote it. Translated from the French by Ian Burchall, with additional material translated from the Russian by Dragan Plavčić.

The Second Balkan Social Democratic Conference²⁸

Manifesto of the Socialist Parties of the Balkans

PRIOR to the convening of the conference, the socialist parties of the Balkans had drawn up and agreed to sign the following manifesto.

To the Working Classes and Peoples of the Balkans

The terrible world war has gone on now for 11 months. For what aims was it declared? The immediate cause of it breaking out was the conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. But this conflict was the result of the urge for conquests in the Balkans of Austria-Hungary, and the aspirations for territorial expansion of the rulers of Serbia. The world war was in its turn inevitable because the Austro-Serb conflict had raised the question of the possession of the Balkan peninsula, where the expansionist interests of all the capitalist states clashed.

Besides the general struggle for the world market, the main objective of the present war is the sharing out of the Balkan peninsula and Turkey. This truth is confirmed by the actual course of events.

The declaration by which the Tsar proclaimed war on Turkey states openly that the Russians would be fighting for the conquest of the Black Sea shores.

At the same time, if Italy has thrown itself into the fight, it was because it was no longer content to have only Albania, willingly ceded by Austria, but wanted to get its hands on the western part of the Balkan peninsula, just as Russia wanted to become masters of the eastern part and transform the Black Sea into a Russian lake.

Sombre Outlook for the Balkans

The allied fleets of France and England control the Aegean Sea (which bathes the shores of Bulgaria and Greece), while to the north of the peninsula the Austrian army, which has once before invaded Serbia, prepares a new invasion.

Elsewhere the gigantic armies of the belligerents mass on the frontiers of Romania, prepared to trample it underfoot at any moment.

Never has the menace of the politics of conquest of the Great Powers been as imminent or as clear as today. The circle of iron and fire squeezes the Balkans ever more tightly.

28. Held in Bucharest on 19-21 July 1915. Translated from the French by Harry Ratner.

Following the entry of Italy into the game, Austria-Hungary no longer has any political considerations to hold it back from conquering Serbia and Macedonia, while strategic considerations actually push it in this direction.

This is how Italy and Austria proceed, arms in hand, into the sharing out of the western and central parts of the Balkan peninsula, a partition already envisaged under the guise of 'spheres of influence' in secret clauses when the Triple Entente was formed, clauses which were made public when the war actually broke out.

Russia, however, cannot consider territorial conquests to the west, where it would come up against powerful neighbours. Therefore its principal aim is directed towards the Balkan peninsula and Turkey, where it has interests and where its expansionist policy will meet the least resistance.

The European war will return to its beginning, and it is here, in the Balkans, that the bloodiest and most horrible episodes will occur, unless the Balkan peoples themselves are able to hold back the waves of aggressive imperialism.

The Criminal Policies of the Balkan Governments

What are the dominant classes and Balkan dynasties doing? What are the Balkan governments doing at the very time that the Balkan peoples are being pushed to the edge of the abyss and threatened with the tragic fate of the Belgian, Polish and Ukrainian peoples?

In Serbia, the dominant classes, after having condemned a people to extermination and ruin in pursuit of the idea of a Greater Serbia, are today forced to see for themselves that Russian Tsarism, which inspired them, has now abandoned them. It has promised a large part of the Serb provinces of Austria to its new ally Italy, which Russia needs more, because of Italy's greater strength.

In Greece, the dominant classes are at the bargaining stage, the price of which will be the future of the Greek people, lulled — and duped — by the dream of the resurrection of the ancient Byzantine Empire.

In Romania, the dominant classes await an opportune moment to throw themselves on Hungary or Russia, or again to repeat the savage 1913 invasion of Bulgaria, and in so doing condemn new working masses to a regime of destitution.

In Bulgaria, they prepare a new calamity for the people by their blind and criminal revanchist politics.

The ruling classes and dynasties of the Balkans hold down the conquered peoples in Macedonia, Dobrudja and Thrace under a regime of exceptional persecution.

This provides the best proof that their aim was not the liberation and unity of the Balkan peoples, but the conquest of new territories, larger markets and new masses of producers and tax-payers to be exploited and robbed.

By such policies they only increase the animosity amongst the Balkan peoples and facilitate the work of the imperialists.

The war into which the governments seek to throw the Balkan peoples — as

is the case for the Bulgarians, Romanians and Greeks who have up till now been spared this calamity — will not be a war of defence or national unity, but a war in which the Balkan armies will be bodies obeying the commands of St Petersburg or Berlin. It will be a war in which the Balkan peoples will shed their blood and abandon their homes ravaged by fire to satisfy the selfish interests of the ruling classes, and will place themselves under a foreign yoke.

The Balkan bourgeoisie, incapable of understanding that its historic mission should at present be the creation of a union of the Balkan peoples, and unable to rise above its petty interests, is split into two camps, fighting each other to decide to whom it is preferable to sell the peoples' liberty: to Russia or Italy, to Germany or Austria-Hungary.

In the Balkan capitals, the press, statesmen and entire parties are selling and buying each other with the millions supplied by the belligerent states.

A terrible treachery, rare in history, is being prepared.

What the Balkan Proletariat Must Do

At this tragic hour, the Balkan proletariat raises its voice to protest at the project of treachery and national murder of the ruling classes and governments of the Balkans. It sounds the alarm in the midst of the working class and popular masses so that they may take upon themselves the welfare and independence of the Balkan peninsula. It is in their interest and it is their duty to struggle for the realisation of a Balkan federation which, since the Belgrade Conference of 1909,²⁹ has become the aim of the Balkan proletariat, the desirability of which subsequent events have proved anew.

The Balkan wars, along with the world war, are proof that only the independent union of the Balkan peoples, free of the guardianship of the Great Powers, can assure the liberty and the national unity of each of its peoples.

Balkan Social Democracy is opposed to Balkan alliances such as those of 1912, which have as their sole aim to make war and which serve as an instrument of Russia, because such an alliance can again lead to catastrophes even worse than those caused by the Balkan War.

Social Democracy is also hostile to a Balkan alliance under the control of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The military and dynastic alliances in the Balkans have served and continue to serve foreign interests: they are harmful to the Balkan peoples.

The Balkan proletariat fights for the political and economic union of the Balkan peoples, decided by their parliaments on the basis of the widest liberty.

The Salvation — A Balkan Republic

Balkan Social Democracy fights for a federal Balkan Republic based on national autonomy, which will ensure the independence of peoples, cause the hate that animates them to disappear, unite them through their federal organisation, and

29. The conference was held in January 1910 (new style), but December 1909 (old style).

give them their surest means of defence by the setting up of national militias in place of standing armies.

At present, the Balkan states maintain a militarism which is beyond their means, and which in no way defends the country since its principal aim is the oppression of the masses and the conquest of foreign peoples. During the Balkan War, this militarism has served the dreams of conquest and grandeur of the Balkan dynasties and bourgeoisies. Today, although it is a question of national defence, militarism will continue to serve the same nationalist and dynastic policy. Following their internecine struggles, the Balkan governments, transformed into pawns of the Great Powers, are preparing the armed forces of the Balkan peoples, not to ensure their own defence, but in order to place them at the service of this or that belligerent state.

This would be the greatest of crimes and veritable suicide for the Balkan peoples.

If the Balkan peoples had been united, none of the great powers would have dared attack them, especially if they had aspired only to defend their soil and their freedom. It is only the Balkan Republic and the formation of national militias, replacing standing armies, which could unite all the forces of the Balkan peoples and imbue them with the enthusiasm needed successfully to oppose foreign invasions.

Any war of conquest in the Balkans, provoking new hatreds and a new struggle for hegemony, will put fresh obstacles on the road to the realisation of the Balkan Republic. This is an additional reason for the social democratic parties of the Balkans to struggle against the participation of the peoples of the Balkans in the war.

The maintenance of an honest and definite neutrality is called for in the Balkans more than in any other countries.

Today, together with the world proletariat, social democracy in the Balkans raises high the banner of peace, and loudly affirms its decision to fight side by side with the proletarians of the whole world, remaining also on the terrain of the revolutionary class struggle for the triumph of socialism which, by abolishing the causes of national antagonisms and war, will create the conditions which will give rise to fraternity and lasting peace between peoples.

Down with war!

Long live peace between peoples!

Long live the Federal Republic of the Balkans!

Long live revolutionary socialism!

The Social Democratic Parties of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece

The Second Balkan Social Democratic Conference

Discussion on the Re-Establishment of the Socialist International

THE comrade president said there were two ways to proceed in discussing this question: either to start a general discussion on the tactics pursued by the various socialist parties before and during the war, or to restrict the discussion to the examination of two concrete questions: 1) The attitude of the Executive Committee of the Bureau of the Socialist International, which did not call a meeting of the Bureau as was its duty, or 2) what line to take in view of the decision of the Italian socialist comrades to call a conference of the *internationalists*.

The conference decided on a general discussion with no restriction.

Comrade Blagoev (Bulgaria) analysed the history of the International in relation to the evolution of the workers' movement and capitalism.

The First International of 1864 demonstrated in its action and organisation a dominant unifying force in London, and ensured respect for its principles and discipline. But the activity of this International was necessarily limited to certain aspects of working class life. Later, with the development of capitalism, the working-class movement itself developed, but international links were loosened.

Absorbed by home concerns, they inevitably took on a national aspect. In the Second International discipline left much to be desired. The Socialist International Bureau contented itself with acting as a registry office which did not seek to penetrate the life of each party, or to know whether it conformed to the principles included in its constitution.

In order to re-establish the International, it is necessary to abandon the toleration of deviations. It is necessary to combat opportunism, social-imperialism and social-patriotism, and to proclaim the principles of class struggle. We must condemn the politics of civil peace, the *Burgfriede* and the *Union Sacrée*. Imperialism, by levelling out the economic conditions of different countries, facilitates the work of unification of methods and programmes and of the re-establishment of the International on really socialist foundations.

Comrade C Dobrogeanu-Gherea (Romania) declared that if he had been consulted on the setting of the agenda he would have opposed the inclusion of this second item. He did not think the time opportune for the discussion of such a difficult and vast problem as the foundations on which the re-establishment of the International should be based. At present, three currents were already emerging in the International: the left, the centre and the right. These currents

were probably represented here. And to engage on a too wide-ranging debate on this item would provoke interminable discussions, as well as regrettable misunderstandings unhelpful to the goal that this conference had set itself. He was of the opinion that the conference should limit itself to expressing its dissatisfaction with respect to the Committee of the International Socialist Bureau which, using various pretexts, avoided calling together the Bureau. At the same time, and in agreement with comrade Blagoev, he believed the conference should disapprove of the opportunist tendencies and scarcely socialist attitudes that some socialist parties adopted in relation to the present conflict.

Comrade Dr E Arbore¹⁰ (Romania) said that if the second item had not figured on the agenda, its inclusion would have been imposed by the arrival at the conference of the socialist women from Berne in the course of the discussion. It is impossible to talk of the foundations on which our Balkan international should be based without touching on the causes that have so damaged the Second International. She agreed with comrade Blagoev that we must oppose the imperialist and opportunist tendencies of the socialist parties of the warring powers with all our might.

Comrade D Marinescu¹¹ (Romania) disagreed with comrade Gherca. He thought a broad ranging discussion on the subject of the second item was necessary and useful, especially as we had to discuss our attitude in relation to a future International Socialist Congress. Circumstances were partly responsible for the crisis through which international socialism was going, but we should not forget the responsibility of certain socialist parties. By voting for war credits, the German socialist party had contributed heavily to the dissolution of the International. In the motion to be voted on, all parties that had deviated from the principles of the class struggle should be condemned.

Comrade C Dobrogeanu-Gherca (Romania) did not deny the importance of a broad discussion on the future of the International. He merely argued that this question should have been discussed inside each party, but that to discuss it at this Inter-Balkan Conference risked preventing us from accomplishing the task for which we had assembled. We should content ourselves with the general affirmations pronounced by Blagoev with which, together with the whole conference, he agreed.

Comrade A Constantinescu¹² (Romania) agreed with comrades Blagoev and Dr E Arbore. It was more than necessary, it was indispensable for socialist unity in the Balkans, which implied a prior unity of views, that we should have a

30. Dr Ecaterina Arbore-Ralli (1873-1938) was a doctor of medicine who was a member of the Romanian Social Democratic Workers Party from its founding in 1893. In 1915, she was a member of the party's Central Committee. She emigrated to Soviet Russia in 1919, where she worked until liquidated by Stalin.

31. Dumitru Marinescu was a trade union leader, and in 1915, a member of the Romanian party's Central Committee and its Secretary. He later joined the Romanian Communist Party.

32. Alexandru (Alec) Constantinescu (1873-1949) was a worker, trade union leader and in 1915 a Romanian Party Central Committee member. He was on the anti-parliamentary left of the new Romanian Communist Party after the war.

clear view on the future of the International and agreement with the other Balkan socialists on the tactics to be pursued.

The session concluded at 1 o'clock.

Afternoon Session

The general discussion on the basis of the future international continued.

Comrade Kirkov³³ (Bulgaria) said that the news that reached us from the belligerent countries spoke of a change among our comrades, and of a return to the tactics of class struggle. Was it not our duty to hold our hands out to these comrades? The future International should squarely place itself on the soil of the class struggle. The Bureau of the Second International acted too much like a 'letter box' which accepted all affiliations without subsequently exercising the necessary control. Therefore we had the right to demand for the future International, a more solid organisation, greater doctrinal discipline and stricter control over the activities of the socialist parties in each country. On the other hand, we were morally obliged to support those who were working for the re-establishment of the International so conceived.

Comrade Rakovsky (Romania) warned the speakers against confusing what was *desired* with what was *possible*. In the old International there were faults and omissions inherent in the degree of development of socialism. Those of us who over 20 years attended the international socialist congresses were aware of the — one might say surprising — degree of ignorance shown by the immense majority of the International on matters of foreign policy, as for example, on the Eastern Question. But now that the workers had seen what this ignorance had cost them — on a matter which was basically one of the causes of the world war — as well as ignorance of the foreign policies of governments, they would certainly try to arm themselves with greater knowledge. He knew of comrades, like for example, the Russian comrade Axelrod,³⁴ who were thinking as of now of setting up permanent international socialist commissions of inquiry. But we should not forget that it is from raising the level of the masses that we should above all expect change. Of course, the socialist education of the proletariat depended a lot on the general ideas that were the basis of our policies. He agreed with Gherea in recognising that it would be inappropriate, and even difficult, to consider the *technical* side of the organisation of the future International. But we should all the more forcefully insist that our defence of socialism im-

33. Georgi Kirkov (1867-1919) was educated in Russia, and founded *Rabotnicheska Vestnik* (*Workers News*) in 1897, which became the paper of Blagoev's Narrows when he sided with them against Sakazov's Brouds in 1903. Kirkov was Secretary-General of the Narrows. He was replaced because of ill-health by Vasil Kolarov when the Bulgarian Communist Party was formed in 1919.

34. Pavel Axelrod (1850-1928) was a leading Russian Menshevik ideologist and later opponent of the Russian Revolution. In 1914, he was quite unable to advance a straightforward line, sympathising with French and Belgian socialists on the need for national defence, whilst also refusing to condemn the treachery of the German socialists. He simultaneously acknowledged that a minor defeat for Russia might help dislodge the Tsar.

posed on us the proclamation that the principle of class struggle remains more than ever sacrosanct.

Comrade A Sideris (Greece) declared himself in agreement with comrade Rakovsky. Our conference could not transform itself into a tribunal; this would be to go beyond the task for which it had been convened. He had had the intention of proposing the convening of an international conference to re-establish the International, but he was happy to learn that the Italian socialists had already taken a similar decision, and it remained for us only to associate ourselves with it.

Comrade C Dobrogeanu-Gherea (Romania) wished to associate himself with the wise observations of Kirkov and Rakovsky. He considered we would have achieved our aim if we limited ourselves to expressing a general judgement without going into particular cases. The place for this would be either an International Congress, or national congresses.

Comrade Gh Cristescu³⁵ (Romania) also thought that an examination of the tactics of the different parties was more in the competence of international congresses. Our duty was to conform to the decisions of the international congresses, and to further the struggle against the war. He proposed entering into contact with the other socialist parties with a view to convening an international socialist congress.

Comrade Sideris (Greece) proposed that the declaration of principles dealing with our attitude to the International be presented as a separate resolution.

The president of the conference stated that there was no reason why the proposal of the deputy from Salonika should not be accepted.

Comrade Blagoev (Bulgaria) proposed the session be adjourned for a few minutes to permit the definitive drawing up of the declaration.

The Socialist International and the Workers' Social Democratic Federation of the Balkans

The Second Inter-Balkan Socialist Conference held in Bucharest on 6/19, 7/20 and 8/21 July 1915, proclaiming the principle of class struggle as the basis of its activity, energetically opposes the *Civil Peace*, the *Union Sacrée* and other forms of class collaboration accepted by some of the socialists of the belligerent countries, and informs the socialist deputies in the Balkan parliaments that they must refuse any support to the governments and dominant classes, for this would fatally relieve the bourgeoisie of the terrible responsibility it carries for the present catastrophe.

The conference also considers it its fraternal duty to appeal to the socialist parties of the belligerent countries to return to the old class struggle, which has proven itself, and to break all pacts with the bourgeoisie. It appeals to them to

35. Gheorghe Cristescu (1882-1973) was a Romanian Party Central Committee member in 1915. He was later the first leader of the Romanian Communist Party (1921-24), until expelled in 1926 for apparently opposing Moscow's increasingly separatist line on the national question in Romania.

intervene seriously, energetically and efficaciously for an end to the war and the conclusion of peace without annexation of territories and without war indemnities.

The conference disapproves of the passivity of the International Socialist Bureau; it calls on it to resume its function, and, failing this, urges the social democratic parties of the Balkans to give all possible help to all socialist initiatives which aim at ending the war and the re-establishment of the International on the basis of international socialism.

On National and Colonial Questions

By Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Edited with an Introduction by Aijaz Ahmad

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Glossary of Key Names

All other names are footnoted as they appear in the text

Blagoev, Dimităr (1856-1924) was the leader of the revolutionary Narrow tendency of Bulgarian Social Democracy after the split with Sakúзов's reformist Broads in 1903, and was arguably the most important Marxist to have ever come out of Bulgaria. Of Macedonian origin, he established the first Marxist group in Russia in 1883. From 1885, he was a consistent defender of the idea of a Balkan federation to include an autonomous Macedonia. The founder of the first Bulgarian Social Democratic Party in 1891. He led the Narrows against the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and voted against war credits in 1915 when Bulgaria entered the First World War. A founder of the Bulgarian Communist Party, but with Bulgaria on the brink of revolution in 1918 he refused to join forces with the radical peasant movement led by Alexander Stamboliiski. He retired in 1923 because of ill-health. He opposed the putschist insurrection attempted by Bulgarian Communists on Comintern orders in September 1923.

Botev, Hristo (1849-1876) was Bulgaria's most revered national poet. A populist socialist who sought to combine the revolutionary struggle for national liberation against Ottoman rule with social equality and the idea of a Balkan federation, he was killed by Turkish troops when he returned to Bulgaria to join the 1876 uprising. He was an inspiration to later Bulgarian socialists.

Dimov, Dimo Hadzhi (1875-1924) was a Macedonian socialist and a follower of Blagoev's Narrows. He was the leading intellectual of the left wing of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) gathered around Sandansky. He opposed Bulgarian meddling in Macedonian affairs, and he advocated the revolutionary struggle of the peasant masses to liberate Macedonia. After the 1905 Rila Congress, when the left gained temporary supremacy in IMRO, he became the editor of the Organisation's paper *Revolutionarni List* (*Revolutionary Journal*) until 1906. He supported the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, and hoped it would lay the basis for a Balkan federation. He was briefly the Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party and a parliamentary deputy in 1924 before being assassinated by right-wing Macedonian nationalists.

Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Constantin (1855-1920) was born Solomon Katz of Ukrainian Jewish origin, and he was once described by Rakovsky as 'the greatest Marxist theorist in the Balkans'. He fled to Romania in 1875 to escape the Tsarist police, and founded the Romanian Social Democratic Workers Party in 1893. After the Romanian party fell apart in 1899, Gherea assisted Rakovsky in rebuilding it after 1905. He opposed Romania's entry into the Second Balkan War of 1913 and the First World War. He opposed the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 as premature. His main contribution was as literary critic in the journal he founded in 1881, *Contemporanul* (*The Contemporary*), and his study *Nou-Serfdom* (1910) on Romanian social relations.

Glavinov, Vasil (1869-1929) was a carpenter from Macedonia who set up the first short-lived social democratic group there in 1894. A member of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party from 1893 and a follower of Blagoev's revolutionary Narrow tendency, he attempted to rebuild the Macedonian group in 1904 and again after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, when he published *Rabotnichesko Likro (Workers Spark)*, 1909-11). Sharply critical of the Young Turks and the socialists who backed them, he refused to join forces with them even against feudal counter-revolution. He attended the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Belgrade in 1910. Later, he was a member of Macedonian Communist émigré groups in Bulgaria.

Kabakchiev, Hristo (1878-1940) was a leading Bulgarian Narrow socialist. A member of the Central Committee from 1905, he was a Parliamentary deputy during 1914-23, and the editor of the Narrow paper, *Rabotnichesko Vestnik (Workers News)*, 1910-23). He was the author of *Towards a Balkan Federation* (1913), and co-author with Trotsky of *Sketches of Bulgarian Political Life* (1923). One of the founders of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Central Committee member during 1919-28, he was arrested following the putschist insurrection attempted by the Bulgarian Communists on Comintern orders in September 1923, but was later amnestied. A member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern during 1924-28, he was arrested in 1937 during Stalin's purges, but was freed in 1938.

Kaclerović, Trša (1879-1964) was a lawyer and one of the founders of the Serbian Social Democratic Party in 1903. Elected parliamentary deputy in 1908 and re-elected in 1912, he refused to vote against war credits during the First Balkan War of 1912 against the Ottoman Empire, but voted against war credits during the First World War. He attended the Kienthal Conference in 1916, joined the Yugoslav Communist Party and became deputy before its banning in 1921. He was the Secretary of the CPY during 1923-25, and a delegate to the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924. Disenchanted, he withdrew from politics in 1926. He was a High Court judge in Tito's Yugoslavia until 1948, when he wrote his unpublished *Memoirs*.

Lapčević, Dragiša (1867-1939) was one of the founders of the Serbian Social Democratic Party in 1903. He was a Central Committee member from 1907, and a Parliamentary deputy during 1905-08 and 1912-19. He voted against war credits during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the First World War. He was later a centrist oppositionist in the embryonic Yugoslav Communist Party. He became the Secretary of the reformist Yugoslav Socialist Party, but then broke from it. He wrote many books, including the first history of Serbian socialism, and later became the librarian to the Yugoslav Parliament.

Marković, Svetozar (1846-1875) was an outstanding figure of early Serbian socialism. An uncompromising opponent of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, he was a scathing opponent of the Serbian state bureaucratic ruling class of his time and its schemes for a Greater Serbia. He established the first socialist newspaper in the Balkans, *Radenik (The Worker)*. He advocated a Balkan-wide revolution and a Balkan federation with power rooted in peasant communal institutions. He died of tuberculosis shortly after his release from a Serbian prison. His major work was *Serbia in the East* (1872).

Popović, Dušan (1885-1918) was one of the most gifted writers of the Serbian Social Democratic Party. He had a particular interest in literary criticism. He was the editor of the party paper, *Radničke Novine (Workers News)*. He criticised the party leadership over the First Balkan War in 1912 against the Ottoman Empire, arguing for less opposition to it. He supported the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. He flirted in 1918 with the nationalist idea of dividing Macedonia between the Balkan states. He

died of tuberculosis in London, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery. His body was removed to Yugoslavia in 1959.

Rakovsky, Christian (1873-1941) was the famously peripatetic Bulgarian-Romanian Marxist, and the most prominent international representative of Balkan socialism during the 1890s and 1900s. In the debate on the Eastern Question in 1896-97, he rejected the views of Marx and Engels as outdated, and argued for support of the independence struggle of the Balkan nations. An intermittent participant in the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, he initially supported Blagoev's revolutionary Narrow tendency in the 1903 split with the reformist Broads. He was then the leading figure of Romanian socialism from 1905, when he helped found the newspaper *România Muncitoare* (*Workers Romania*). Expelled from Romania in 1907, in 1911-12 he attempted to reconcile the Bulgarian Narrows and Broads with his paper *Naпред* (*Forward*), where he advocated the idea of a Balkan 'confederation', provoking Blagoev's opposition. He returned to Romania in 1912, opposed the Balkan Wars in 1912-13 and the First World War. A close friend of Trotsky, he supported the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 and became head of Soviet Ukraine during the Civil War. He was a leading member of Trotsky's opposition to Stalin. A victim of Stalin's purges, he died in prison.

Sakúzov, Yanko (1860-1941) was one of the founders of the Bulgarian Social Democracy, and was later the leader of the reformist 'Broad' tendency after the split with Blagoev's revolutionary 'Narrows' in 1903. He developed the idea that socialists in backward countries must make 'common cause' with progressive bourgeois elements to promote reforms. A Parliamentary deputy during 1893-96, 1902-03 and 1911-34, he voted against war credits during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, but abstained during the First World War. He was the Minister of Trade, Industry and Work in 1918-19.

Sandanaky, Yané (1872-1915) was a Macedonian revolutionary and the leader of the left wing of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO). He was influenced by agrarian socialist ideas, and greeted the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 with enthusiasm. He helped to found the People's Federative Party in 1909 with many socialists, which gave the Young Turks critical support. He opposed Bulgarian interference in Macedonia, and was assassinated in 1915 by his pro-Bulgarian opponents.

Tucović, Dumitrije (1881-1914) was arguably the most important Marxist to have ever come out of Serbia. One of the founders of the Serbian Social Democratic Party in 1903, he became the *de facto* party leader in 1908. He organised the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Belgrade in 1910, and famously attacked the Austrian Social Democrats at the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International for their opportunist stance on the Habsburg annexation of Bosnia. He opposed the Balkan Wars in 1912-13 and the First World War, in which he was killed. His major work was *Serbia and Albania* (1914).



Map 1. The Balkans after the Treaty of Berlin, 1878



Map 2. The Balkans after the Second Balkan War, 1913



Map 3. The Balkans, 2003

The Balkan Socialist Tradition and the Balkan Federation, 1871-1915

The collapse of Yugoslavia was a disaster. Apart from the human misery, the wars that tore Yugoslavia apart resulted in the establishment of weak successor states each competing for economic and political favours from the West, claims and counter-claims upon territory, and the direct intervention of Western powers in the Balkans. The disintegration of Yugoslavia also resulted in great confusion arising amongst left-wingers. Socialists variously sided with one or another of the warring factions, on the grounds of defending a 'socialist' state or the right of nations to self-determination, whilst others refused to take sides.

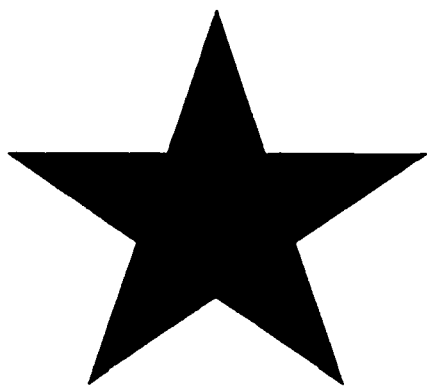
This issue of *Revolutionary History* is devoted to the debates on the 'Eastern Question' within the Second International. Readers will discover how the socialists of the day attempted to deal with the complexities of the national question in the Balkans within the context of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, imperialist expansion into the Balkan Peninsula, the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The most important conclusion reached was that a Balkan Federation was the only means by which the national question could possibly be resolved — a lesson which some have yet to learn.

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Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it